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No 117

1/-

THE TROUBLED SEA

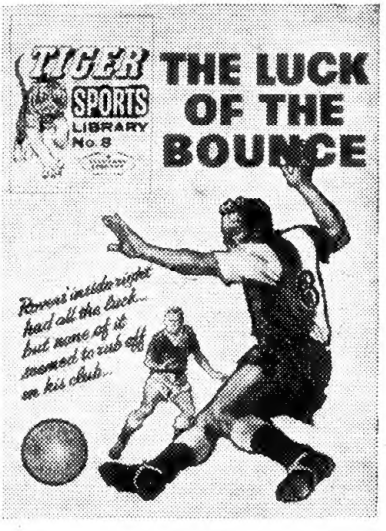
SOCCER ACTION, SOCCER THRILLS . . .

FOLLOW THE FORTUNES OF TWO TRUE-TO-LIFE TEAMS AT OPPOSITE ENDS OF THE FOOTBALL LADDER OF FAME

ON SALE NOW :—

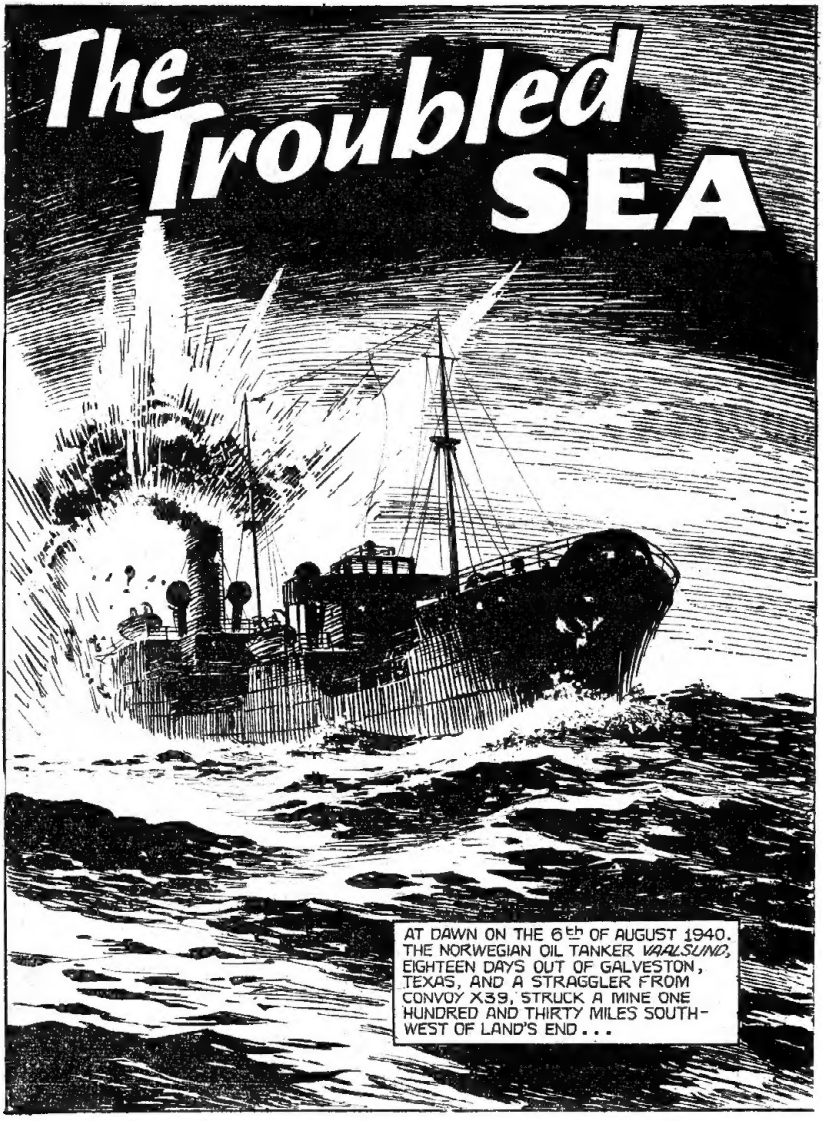
TIGER SPORTS LIBRARY Nos. 7 and 8

No. 7.—**HIT-AND-RUN.** Suspected of having knocked down a child in his powerful vintage sports car, Carford goalie, Ron Towers, faces a bleak future.



No. 8.—**THE LUCK OF THE BOUNCE.** A new star for the Rovers . . . but the star burns too bright for a small town like Bradmere . . .

TIGER SPORTS LIBRARY



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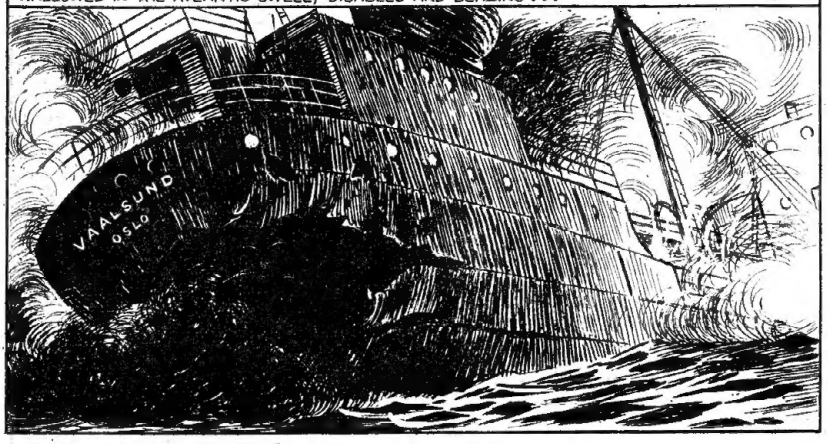
Chapter 1. The QUARRY

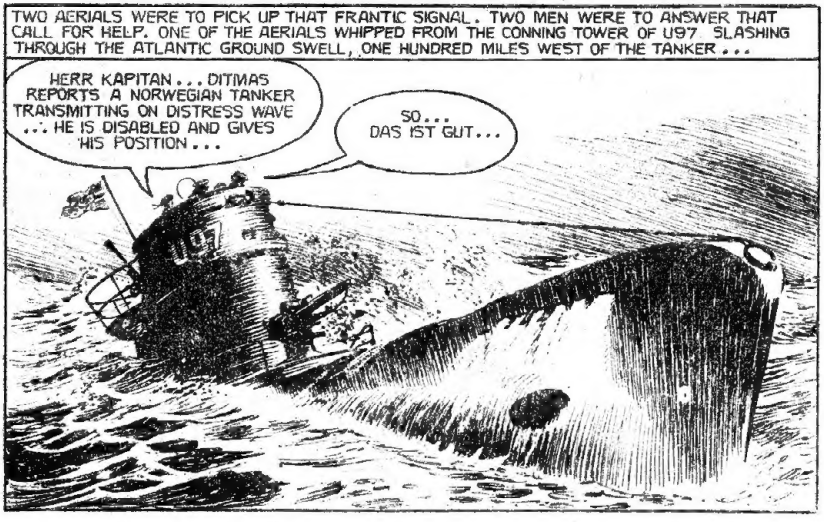
THE MINE DETONATED AGAINST THE STERN OF THE *VAALSUND*. IT BLEW AWAY THE RUDDER AND SCREWS AND IGNITED THE PART-REFINED FUEL STORED IN THE AFTER-HOLD. THE TANKER WALLOWED IN THE ATLANTIC SWELL, DISABLED AND BLAZING ...



THE FIRE WAS BURNING FIERCELY, BUT IT HAD BEEN ISOLATED IN THE ENGINE-ROOM AND AFTER-HOLD. THE CAPTAIN WAS MAKING FOR THE WIRELESS CABIN WHEN THE MATE JOINED HIM ...

GRIM-FACED, THE CAPTAIN SHOULDERED HIS WAY INTO THE WIRELESS CABIN.
WE HAVE NO CHOICE, HENRIK... WE ARE HELPLESS! OPERATOR, MAKE THIS SIGNAL WITH OUR POSITION ON DISTRESS WAVE...

FROM THE SMOKE-GRIMED AERIAL OF THE BURNING TANKER, THE MORSE SIGNAL STUTTERED OUT OVER THE EMPTY WASTES OF THE ATLANTIC. IT WAS A DESPERATE CRY FOR HELP FROM A STRICKEN SHIP...

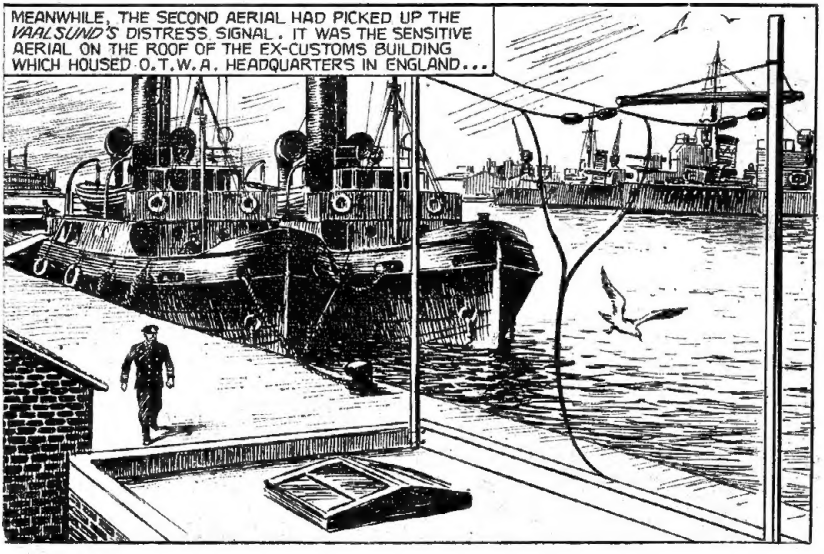

TWO AERIALS WERE TO PICK UP THAT FRANTIC SIGNAL. TWO MEN WERE TO ANSWER THAT CALL FOR HELP. ONE OF THE AERIALS WHIPPED FROM THE CONNING TOWER OF U97 SLASHING THROUGH THE ATLANTIC GROUND SWELL, ONE HUNDRED MILES WEST OF THE TANKER...
HERR KAPITAN... DITMAS REPORTS A NORWEGIAN TANKER TRANSMITTING ON DISTRESS WAVE ... HE IS DISABLED AND GIVES HIS POSITION...
SO... DAS IST GUT...
U97

ONE OF THE MEN WAS KORVETTENKAPITAN DIRK WOLF...
THE HERR KAPITAN WILL NOT DETOUR TO MAKE AN ATTACK? WE HAVE BARELY ENOUGH FUEL TO REACH BASE...
YOU QUESTION MY JUDGMENT, OBERLEUTNANT FRANCK? IT IS MY DUTY TO SINK THIS NORWEGIAN... IT IS ALSO MY PLEASURE!
U97

THIS WAS WOLF'S FIRST OPERATION IN U97. HE HAD EARNED THE RESPECT OF HIS CREW AS AN EFFICIENT AND DETERMINED COMMANDER. BUT HE HAD NOT EARNED THEIR LIKING...
HAS HE NOT DONE ENOUGH KILLING FOR ONE SORTIE, THE WOLF, WITHOUT PUTTING A FISH IN A HELPLESS WRECK?
SILENCE, DITMAS... YOU ARE INSUBORDINATE...

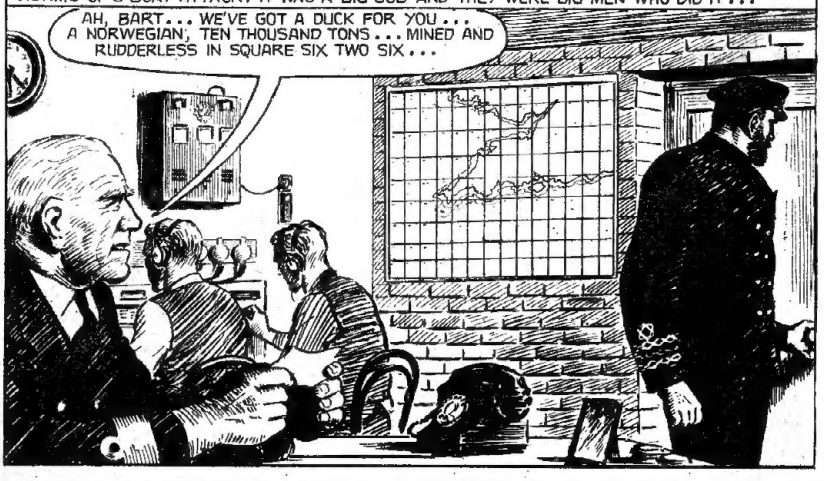
DISCIPLINE WAS MORE NECESSARY IN THE U-BOAT SERVICE THAN IN ANY OTHER BRANCH OF THE GERMAN NAVY.
YOU HAVE OUR COURSE, OBERLEUTNANT?
JAWOHL, HERR KAPITÄN. TWO-ONE-O. AT TEN KNOTS, WE SHALL REACH THE POSITION IN ELEVEN HOURS.

DIRK WOLF WAS ANSWERING THE *VAALSUND'S* CALL FOR HELP WITH MURDER IN HIS HEART...
IF THE NORWEGIAN HAS PUT OUT A DISTRESS SIGNAL, NO DOUBT THE BRITISH HAVE PICKED IT UP... PERHAPS WE SHALL BE ABLE TO SINK A RESCUE SHIP AS WELL AS THE TANKER! THAT WILL BE PLEASANT, NEIN?


MEANWHILE, THE SECOND AERIAL HAD PICKED UP THE *VAALSUND'S* DISTRESS SIGNAL. IT WAS THE SENSITIVE AERIAL ON THE ROOF OF THE EX-CUSTOMS BUILDING WHICH HOUSED O.T.W.A. HEADQUARTERS IN ENGLAND...

The Troubled Sea

O.T.W.A. STOOD FOR *OCEAN-GOING TUGBOATS WESTERN APPROACHES*. IT WAS THE JOB OF THESE TUGS TO BRING IN FROM THE HOSTILE ATLANTIC THE MANGLED BUT STILL-FLOATING VICTIMS OF U-BOAT ATTACK. IT WAS A BIG JOB AND THEY WERE BIG MEN WHO DID IT . . .



LIEUTENANT COMMANDER BARTHOLOMEW SHEPHERD R.N.R, WAS THE SECOND OF THE TWO MEN WHO WOULD ANSWER THAT CALL FOR HELP FROM THE *VAALSUND* . . .

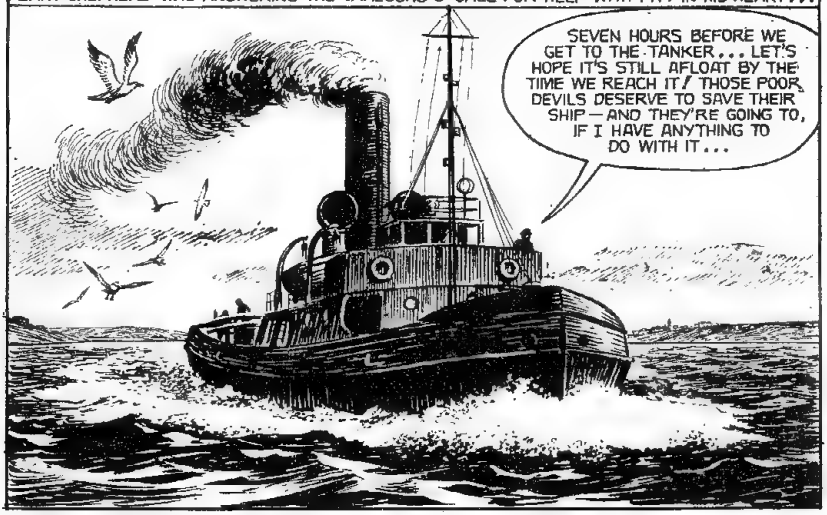
SOMETIMES THE COMMODORE HATED HIS JOB AS CHIEF OF O.T.W.A...
EVERY TIME I SEND THE ALICE OUT, I FEEL LIKE A MURDERER, BART! IF YOU HAD A GUN ON THAT TUGBOAT OF YOURS IT'D BE DIFFERENT...YOU COULD HIT BACK AT ANY JERRY WHO CAME GUNNING FOR YOU...
JERRY'S GOT HIS JOB TO DO, COMMODORE, SAME AS I'VE GOT MINE... I DON'T WANT TO HIT BACK AT HIM, I JUST WANT TO BRING THAT DUCK BACK SAFELY...

THE COMMODORE AND THE MET. OFFICER WATCHED SHEPHERD CROSS THE PIER WITH RESPECT IN THEIR EYES...
STRETCHER BEARERS, THAT'S WHAT THOSE TUGBOAT MEN ARE, SIR... UNARMED ON A BATTLEFIELD... IT MUST TAKE GRIT TO DO THAT JOB...
IT TAKES GUTS, JOHNSON... BUT OLD BART SHEPHERD'S GOT SOMETHING RARER...HE'S GOT A HEART OF GOLD...

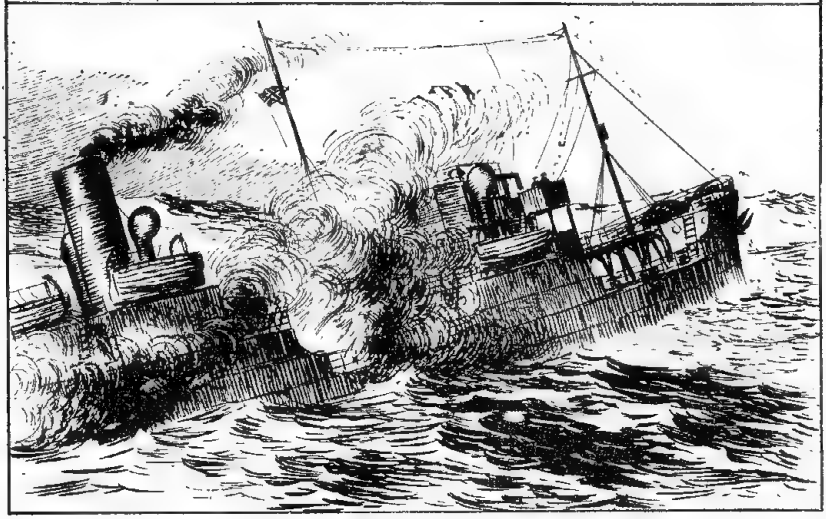
BART SHEPHERD'S MATE, GEORGE KEELER, WAS WORKING IN THE STERN OF THE ALICE WITH A GROUP OF DECKHANDS...
HEY, GEORGE! WE'VE GOT A DUCK IN SQUARE SIX TWO SIX! TELL THE CHIEF I'LL NEED STEAM IN FIFTEEN MINUTES! WHAT ARE YOU DOING AFT THERE, ANYWAY?
GIVING THE ALICE SOME TEETH, SKIPPER, THAT'S WHAT I'M DOING...

The Troubled Sea

BART SHEPHERD WAS ANSWERING THE *VAALSUND'S* CALL FOR HELP WITH PITY IN HIS HEART...



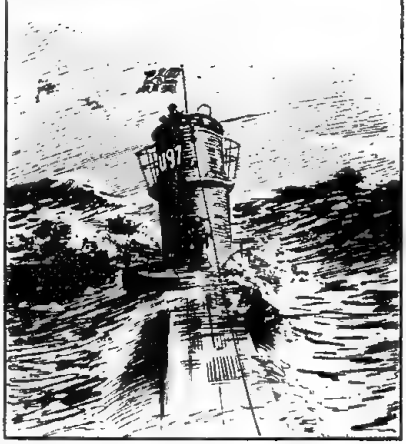
THE AUGUST SUN CLIMBED OVER THE WASTES OF THE ATLANTIC, FAR OUT BEYOND LAND'S END, THE *VAALSUND* WALLOWED IN THE LONG SWELL, ALONE AND BURNING SULLENLY. BUT SHE WOULD NOT BE ALONE FOR LONG...



The Troubled Sea

BASHING HER WAY THROUGH THE SWELL FROM THE NORTH-EAST, THE TUGBOAT *ALICE* WAS MAKING TWELVE KNOTS UNDER FULL STEAM AS SHE HEADED FOR THE STRICKEN TANKER.

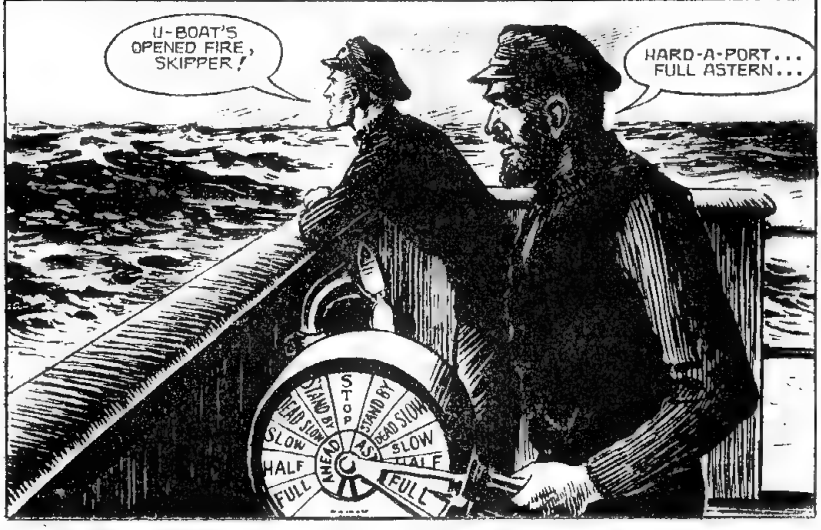
FROM THE SOUTH-WEST, U97 CAME GLIDING THROUGH THE UNEASY WATER, HER DIESELS DRIVING THE SHARP STEEL BOWS TOWARDS HER VICTIM...



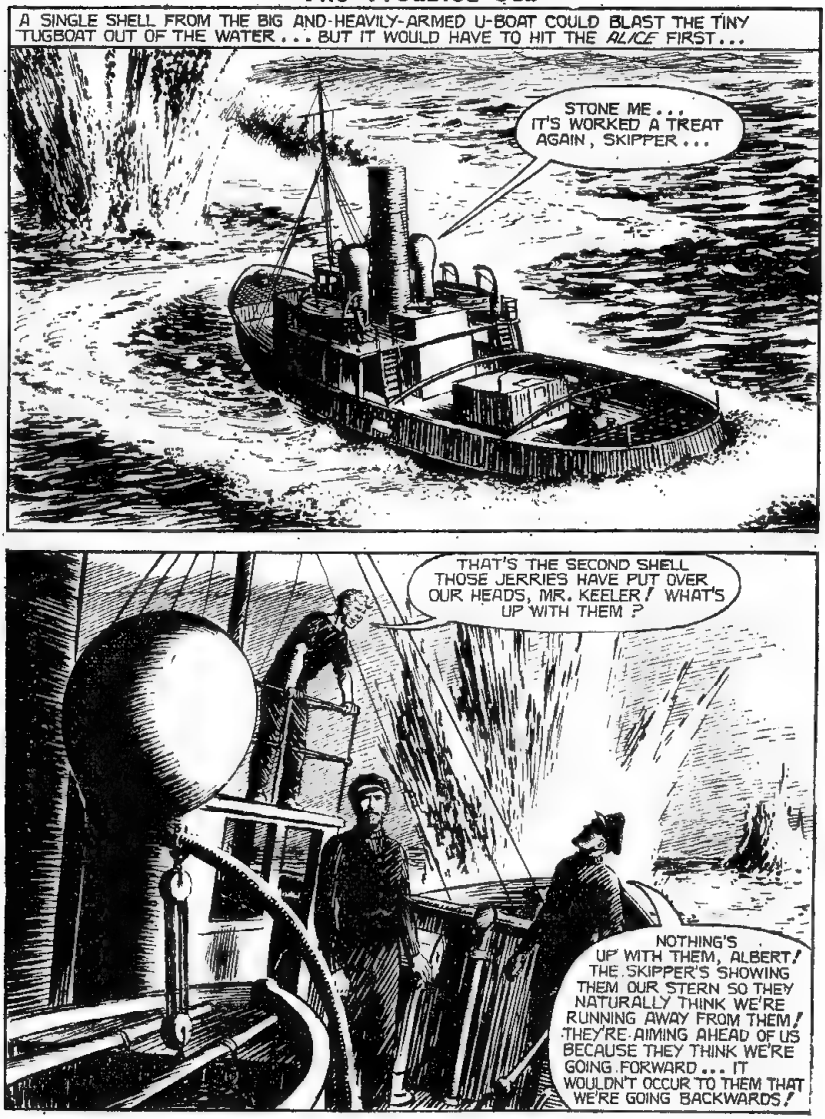
ONE HOUR BEFORE SUNSET, WITH THE HELPLESS TANKER STILL BELOW THE HORIZON, THE BRITISH TUGBOAT AND THE GERMAN U-BOAT SIGHTED EACH OTHER. KAPITAN WOLF AND CAPTAIN SHEPHERD WERE MEETING FOR THE FIRST—BUT NOT THE LAST—TIME...

IN THE CONNING TOWER OF U97, KAPITAN DIRK WOLF SMILED GREEDILY AT THE TINY BRITISH TUG. HEINI FRANK SAW THAT SMILE AND KNEW, WITH A SUDDEN SOURNESS IN HIS MOUTH, THAT THIS MAN WAS NOT JUST DOING AN UNPLEASANT JOB... HE WAS ENJOYING IT...

CAPTAIN BART SHEPHERD HAD BEEN WAITING FOR THE ORANGE FLASH OF THE U-BOAT'S GUN. WHEN IT CAME, HIS ORDERS WERE CALM AND DELIBERATE...



The Troubled Sea



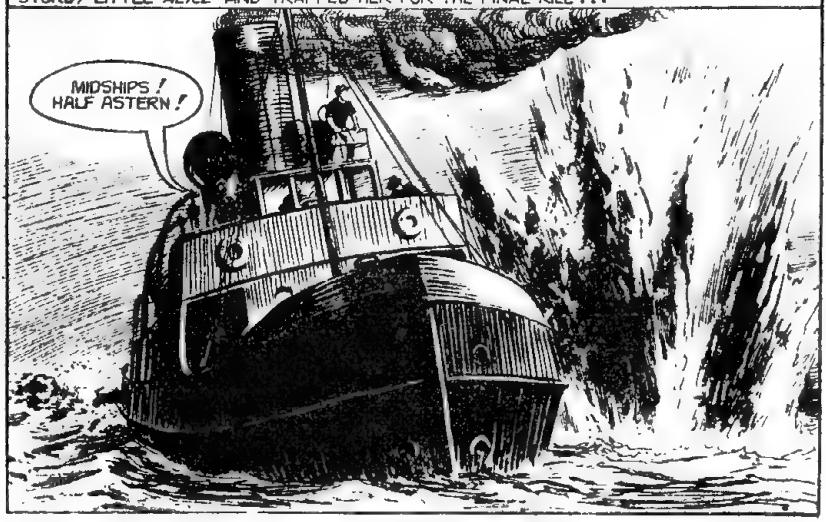
IT WAS AN OLD TRICK OF BART SHEPHERD'S AND IT HAD CONFUSED WISER GERMAN COMMANDERS THAN DIRK WOLF. BUT IT COULD ONLY GIVE A BRIEF RESPITE TO THE UNARMED TUG...
FOOLS... THREE SHELLS AND THE ENGLANDER IS STILL UNTOUCHED...
TEUFEL! THE TARGET IS GOING ASTERN... DOWN TWO HUNDRED, SHOOT! SCHNELL!
U97

THE U-BOAT'S FOURTH SHELL PLOUGHED INTO THE SEA TEN YARDS FROM THE ALICE'S PORT BEAM, SHAKING THE LITTLE TUGBOAT LIKE A TERRIER...
THAT ONE WAS CLOSER, SKIPPER...
AYE... JERRY'S TWIGGED WHAT WE'RE UP TO... WE'LL TURN AROUND AND MAKE ANOTHER DASH FOR THE DUCK... ONCE WE'RE WITHIN RANGE OF HER QUICK-FIRERS, THAT U-BOAT'LL KEEP HIS DISTANCE...

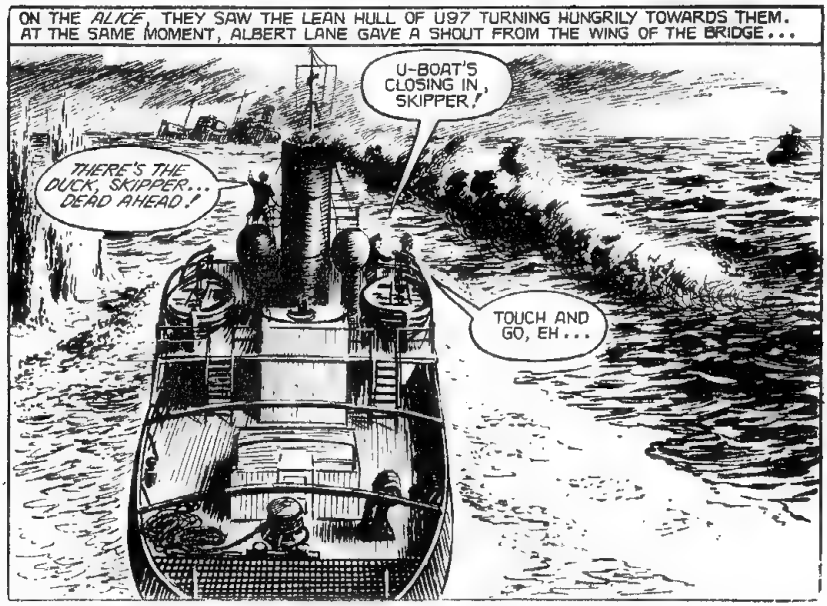
The Troubled Sea

FOR THE NEXT TEN MINUTES, THE POWERFUL U-BOAT PLAYED A DEADLY GAME OF HIDE-AND-SEEK WITH THE UNARMED TUGBOAT. NOW THE VETERAN WISDOM OF CAPTAIN BARTHOLOMEW SHEPHERD WAS PITTED AGAINST THE MURDEROUS SKILL OF KAPITAN DIRK WOLF...

BUT IT WAS ONLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE ONE OF THOSE VICIOUS SHELLS HIT THE STURDY LITTLE *ALICE* AND TRAPPED HER FOR THE FINAL KILL...



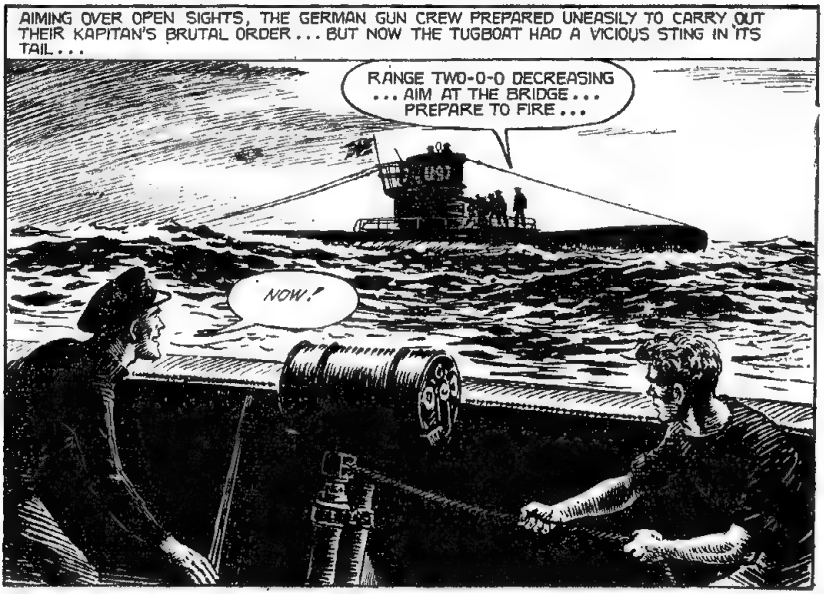
BUT KAPITAN WOLF WAS A GREEDY MAN. IT WAS AN EXECUTION HE WANTED, NOT A DUEL. HE TURNED HARSHLY ON HIS SWEATING GUN CREW...
ENOUGH! IF YOU CLUMSY FOOLS CANNOT SCORE A HIT AT THIS RANGE, I WILL CLOSE IN! THIS DEVIL OF A TUGBOAT MUST BE SMASHED!


ON THE ALICE, THEY SAW THE LEAN HULL OF U97 TURNING HUNGRILY TOWARDS THEM. AT THE SAME MOMENT, ALBERT LANE GAVE A SHOUT FROM THE WING OF THE BRIDGE...
U-BOAT'S CLOSING IN, SKIPPER!
THERE'S THE DUCK, SKIPPER... DEAD AHEAD!
TOUCH AND GO, EH...

EVEN THEN, IN THE SHADOW OF DEATH, CAPTAIN BART SHEPHERD'S THOUGHTS WERE NOT FOR HIMSELF BUT FOR THE HELPLESS SHIP WHICH STILL BURNED UNDER ITS PALL OF GREASY SMOKE...

THE TUGBOAT SKIPPER TRAINED HIS BINOCULARS ON THE LEAN FIGURE OF HIS OPPOSITE NUMBER IN THE CONNING TOWER. THE THIN FACE OF U97's COMMANDER LOOKED PITIFULLY YOUNG TO BART SHEPHERD...

ONE DAY, CAPTAIN SHEPHERD AND KAPITAN WOLF WOULD KNOW EACH OTHER BETTER...
SO... THE OLD FOOL LOOKS AS HARMLESS AS HIS BOAT... WE WILL BLOW HIM OUT OF THE WATER, SCHOFFER!
JAWOHL, HERR KAPITAN... IF YOU SAY SO...
SHALLOW SETTING, ALBERT... GET READY...


AIMING OVER OPEN SIGHTS, THE GERMAN GUN CREW PREPARED UNEASILY TO CARRY OUT THEIR KAPITAN'S BRUTAL ORDER... BUT NOW THE TUGBOAT HAD A VICIOUS STING IN ITS TAIL...
RANGE TWO-0-0 DECREASING ... AIM AT THE BRIDGE... PREPARE TO FIRE...
NOW!

The Troubled Sea

THE HEAVY CANISTER OF HIGH EXPLOSIVE FELL CLOSE TO THE HULL OF THE U-BOAT. ON SHALLOW SETTING, IT EXPLODED VIOLENTLY JUST UNDER THE SURFACE...

AAAGH!

U97

A SINGLE MONSTROUS SHOCK WAVE SLAMMED AGAINST THE STEEL HULL OF U97, ROLLING IT WILDLY OVER IN THE TORTURED WATER. IN THE CONNING TOWER, KAPITAN DIRK WOLF BARED HIS TEETH...

HIMMEL! DEPTH CHARGE! THE SWINE... THE SWINE...

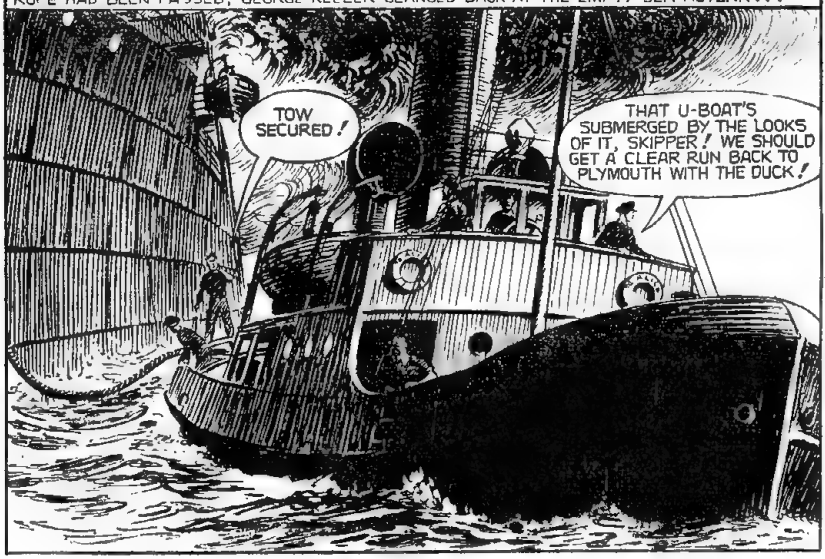
STOPPED DEAD IN ITS TRACKS BY THAT UNEXPECTED ATTACK, THE U-BOAT DROPPED ASTERN OF THE ALICE. ON THE TUGBOAT, GEORGE KEELEK AND THE CREW WERE EXULTANT...
WE DID IT, SKIPPER! THE U-BOAT'S HOVE-TO!
AYE... NICE WORK, GEORGE! NOW LET'S GET THAT TOW ABOARD THE DUCK, SHALL WE?

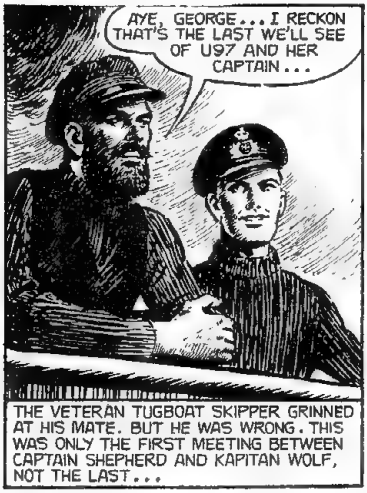
AS THE LISTING OPPONENT PLOUGHED AHEAD TOWARDS THE BURNING TANKER, KAPITAN DIRK WOLF LASHED HIS OFFICERS AND CREW WITH THE HARSH EDGE OF HIS TONGUE...
THE GUN IS KAPUT, HERR KAPITAN! THE TRUNNION BRACKETS ARE SNAPPED!
WHY DO YOU STAND THERE, THEN? WE WILL SUBMERGE AND USE THE TWO TORPEDOES WE HAVE LEFT! SCHNELL, SCHNELL!

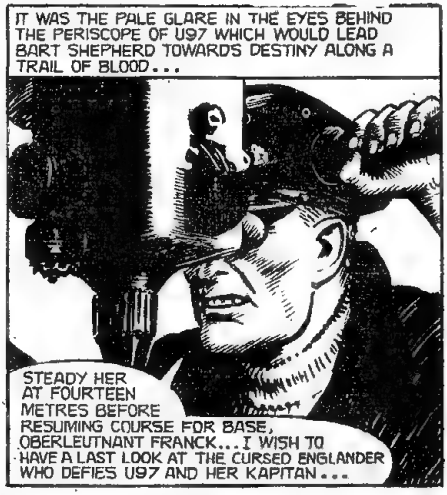
The Troubled Sea

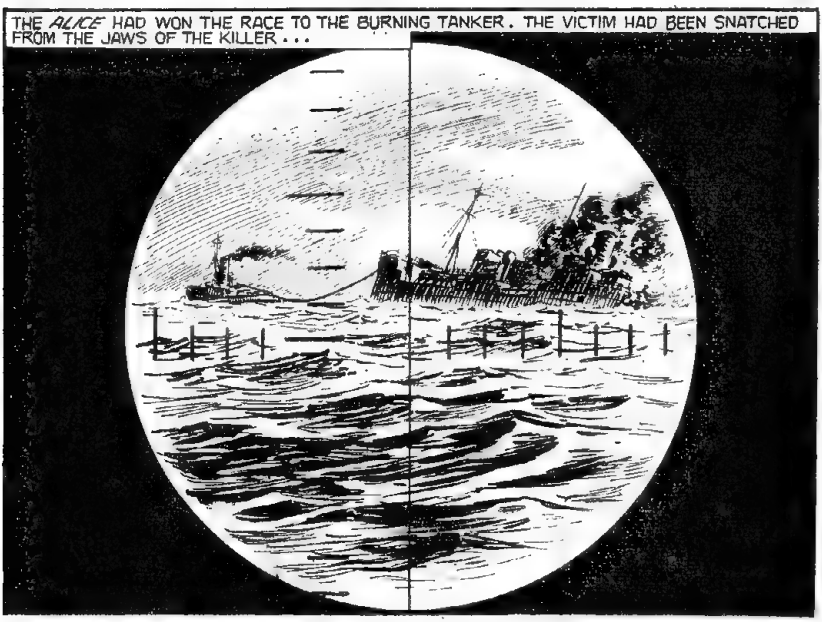
THE *ALICE'S* DEPTH CHARGES HAD DONE NO SERIOUS DAMAGE TO THE HULL OF U97, BUT THEY HAD DRAWN ITS FANGS...

WHEN THE TUGBOAT HAD CLAWED ITS WAY ALONGSIDE THE BURNING *VAALSUND*, AND THE TOW ROPE HAD BEEN PASSED, GEORGE KEELER GLANCED BACK AT THE EMPTY SEA ASTERN...



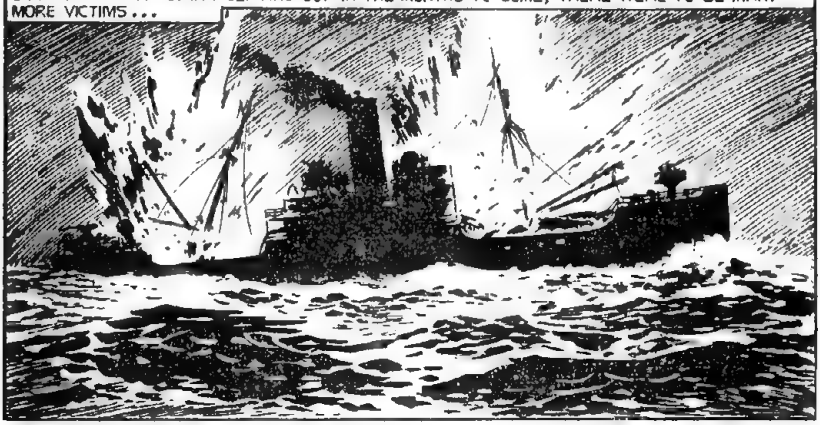

AYE, GEORGE... I RECKON THAT'S THE LAST WE'LL SEE OF U97 AND HER CAPTAIN...
THE VETERAN TUGBOAT SKIPPER GRINNED AT HIS MATE. BUT HE WAS WRONG. THIS WAS ONLY THE FIRST MEETING BETWEEN CAPTAIN SHEPHERD AND KAPITAN WOLF, NOT THE LAST...


IT WAS THE PALE GLARE IN THE EYES BEHIND THE PERISCOPE OF U97 WHICH WOULD LEAD BART SHEPHERD TOWARDS DESTINY ALONG A TRAIL OF BLOOD...
STEADY HER AT FOURTEEN METRES BEFORE RESUMING COURSE FOR BASE, OBERLEUTNANT FRANCK... I WISH TO HAVE A LAST LOOK AT THE CURSED ENGLANDER WHO DEFIES U97 AND HER KAPITAN...


THE ALICE HAD WON THE RACE TO THE BURNING TANKER. THE VICTIM HAD BEEN SNATCHED FROM THE JAWS OF THE KILLER...

Chapter 2. TRAIL of BLOOD

BUT FOR KAPITAN DIRK WOLF AND U97 IN THE MONTHS TO COME, THERE WERE TO BE MANY MORE VICTIMS...

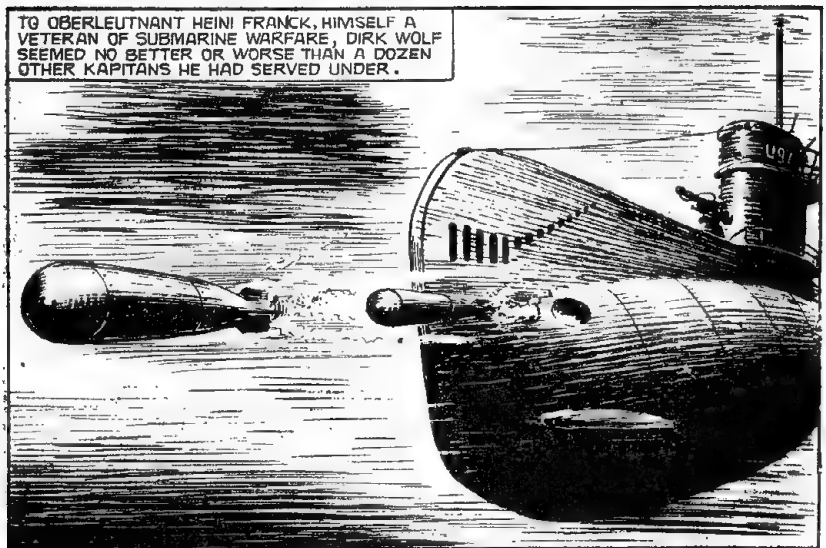


KAPITAN WOLF REVEALED HIMSELF TO HIS CREW IN THAT BITTER WINTER OF 1940—41 AS A COLD-BLOODEDLY EFFICIENT UNTERZEEBOAT OFFICER. U97 SELDOM RETURNED TO BREST FROM ITS SORTIES INTO THE WESTERN ATLANTIC WITH TORPEDOES LEFT UNUSED IN ITS TUBES...

HE LIKED TO WORK ALONE, THE KAPITAN OF U97. HE CHOSE ISOLATED SHIPS AS HIS VICTIMS, STRAGGLERS FROM CONVOYS. HE WAS SELDOM SURPRISED BY THE BRITISH ESCORT DESTROYERS AND WHEN HE WAS, HE DIVED FAST AND DEEP...

HE HAD NEVER TALKED ABOUT THAT INCIDENT WITH THE TUGBOAT ON HIS FIRST TRIP IN U97 AND THE EMOTION HE HAD SHOWN THEN, HE HAD NEVER SHOWN SINCE.

TO OBERLEUTNANT HEINI FRANCK, HIMSELF A VETERAN OF SUBMARINE WARFARE, DIRK WOLF SEEMED NO BETTER OR WORSE THAN A DOZEN OTHER KAPITANS HE HAD SERVED UNDER.



IN FACT, IT WAS SIX MONTHS AFTER THE TUGBOAT INCIDENT THAT HEINI FRANCK REALISED FOR THE FIRST TIME THAT HIS NEW COMMANDING OFFICER WAS *NOT* LIKE THE OTHERS.

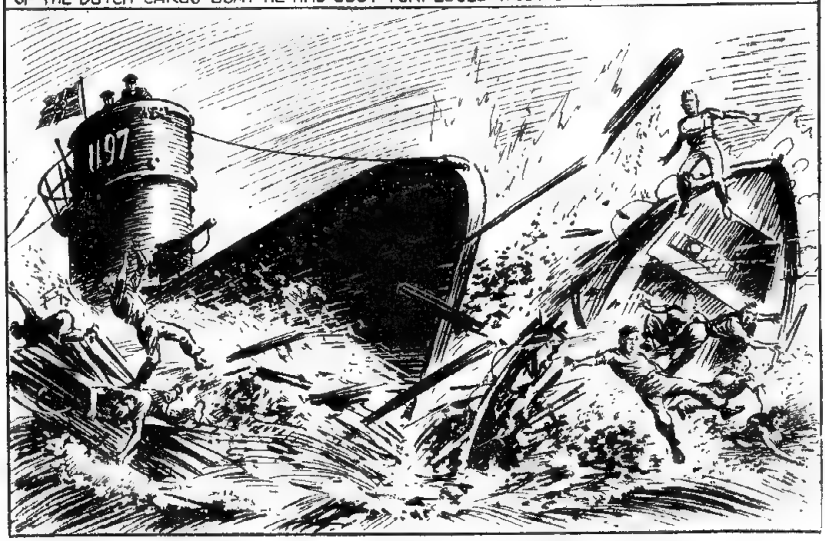
The Troubled Sea

CLIMBING INTO THE CONNING-TOWER AFTER KAPITAN WOLF, HEINI FRANCK SAW IN THE EYES OF HIS COMMANDING OFFICER THE PALE GLARE HE HAD SEEN THERE ONCE BEFORE...
HERR KAPITAN... THE BRITISH SHIP IS KAPUT... WE DO NOT NEED TO FIRE ON THEM...
SILENCE, OBERLEUTNANT! YOU FORGET YOURSELF! NOW, SCHOFFER, GIVE THE BRITISH SWINE A TASTE OF THE WHIP!
U97

AS THE U-BOAT'S SHELLS EXPLODED BRUTALLY AMONG THE STRUGGLING SURVIVORS OF THE BRITISH FREIGHTER, KAPITAN WOLF GRINNED CRUELLY.

THAT MURDEROUS ORDER TO FIRE ON A SINKING SHIP AND ITS HELPLESS CREW HAD SICKENED HEINI FRANCK. HE STARED AT KAPITAN DIRK WOLF NOW WITH BARELY-CONCEALED DISGUST. THE KAPITAN WAS LICKING HIS THIN LIPS...

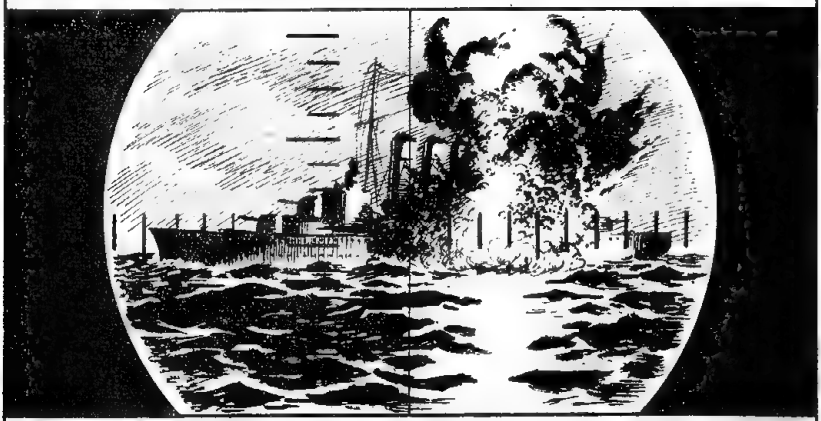
ONE MONTH LATER, IN MARCH 1941, KAPITAN DIRK WOLF SURFACED U97 AND DELIBERATELY DROVE IT AT FULL SPEED THROUGH THE BOATS AND RAFTS OF THE DUTCH CARGO BOAT HE HAD JUST TORPEDOED WEST OF THE AZORES...



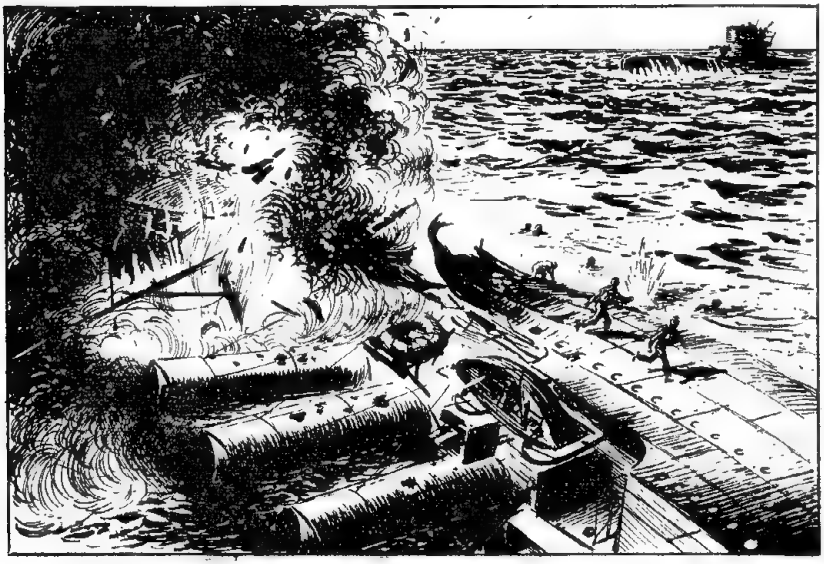
ON U97'S NEXT OPERATION, UP TO THE SOUTH-WESTERN COAST OF EIRE, KAPITAN DIRK WOLF SIGHTED A SINGLE DRIFTING LIFEBOAT CRAMMED WITH MEN. HE SHELLED THIS LIFEBOAT FOR THIRTY MINUTES, LAZILY, BEFORE A DIRECT HIT BLEW THE MEN IN IT TO PIECES...

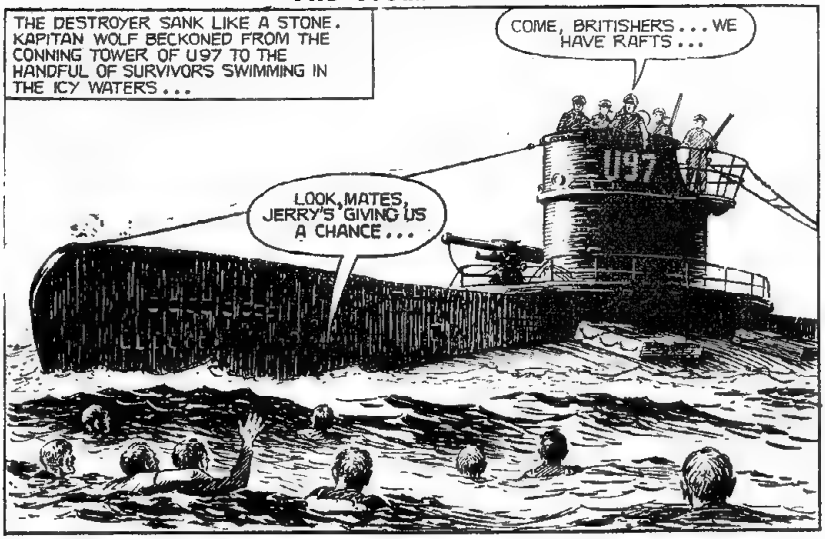
IN APRIL 1941, KAPITAN DIRK WOLF WAS AWARDED THE IRON CROSS. IT WAS PRESENTED BY AN ADMIRAL ON THE QUAYSIDE AT BREST. THE OFFICERS AND MEN OF U97 WATCHED THE CEREMONY, BUT THERE WAS NO PRIDE ON THEIR SULLEN FACES...

THE CREW OF U97, VETERANS LIKE HEINI FRANCK, YOUNGSTERS LIKE WILLI DITMAS, HAD A DUTY TO CARRY OUT FOR THE FATHERLAND. THE JOB THEY DID WAS A DEADLY ONE, BUT IT WAS A JOB. THEY WERE NOT MURDERERS . . .



KAPITAN DIRK WOLF WAS A MURDERER. HIS CREW KNEW IT. IN JUNE 1941, RETURNING FROM PATROL IN THE WESTERN ATLANTIC, U97 TORPEDOED A BRITISH DESTROYER, THE *GARNET,* AND SURFACED . . .




THE DESTROYER SANK LIKE A STONE. KAPITAN WOLF BECKONED FROM THE CONNING TOWER OF U97 TO THE HANDFUL OF SURVIVORS SWIMMING IN THE ICY WATERS...
COME, BRITISHERS... WE HAVE RAFTS...
U97
LOOK, MATES, JERRY'S GIVING US A CHANCE...

FOR ONE MOMENT, OBERLEUTNANT HEINI FRANCK THOUGHT THAT KAPITAN WOLF WAS AT LAST SHOWING MERCY TO HIS VICTIMS. THEN...
CUT THE LASHINGS... HEAVE THE RAFTS OVERBOARD!
HALT! I HAVE GIVEN NO SUCH ORDERS! GET BELOW, ALL OF YOU! PREPARE TO SUBMERGE!

DUMBFOUNDED, HEINI FRANCK TURNED TOWARDS HIS COMMANDING OFFICER. THE THIN FACE WAS ICY. ONLY THERE WAS THE PALE GLARE HE HAD SEEN BEFORE IN KAPITAN DIRK WOLF'S EYES.

BUT I THOUGHT ...YOU POINTED TO THE RAFTS, HERR KAPITAN...

SO? DID I SAY THE RAFTS WERE FOR THE ENGLANDERS? LET THE SWINE SWIM BACK TO THEIR FILTHY ENGLAND! GET BELOW, OBERLEUTNANT!

THE HANDFUL OF EXHAUSTED SURVIVORS FROM THE BRITISH DESTROYER HAD ALMOST REACHED THE U-BOAT'S HULL. KAPITAN DIRK WOLF WATCHED THEM, A VICIOUS SMILE ON HIS THIN FACE...

U97

TAKE HER DOWN TO FIFTY METRES, OBERLEUTNANT! AUF WIEDERSEHEN! MY BRITISH FRIENDS...

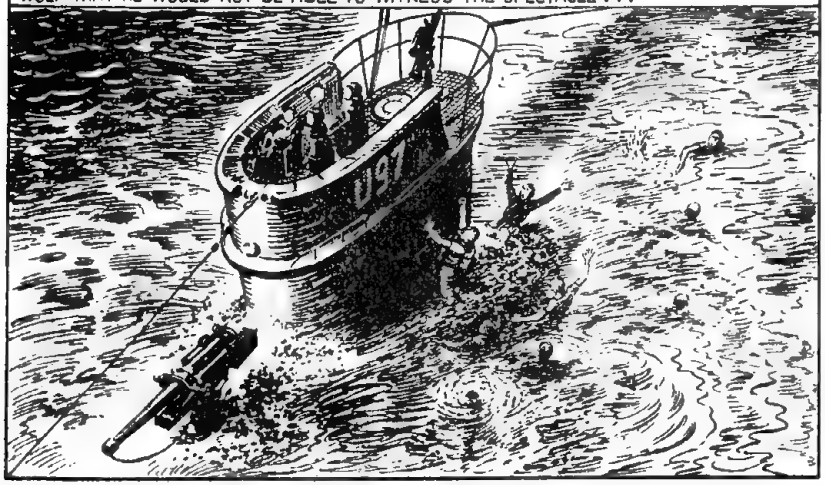
A DOZEN MEN CLAWED AND TORE AT THE LOCKED STEEL HULL WHICH WAS THEIR ONLY HOPE OF SURVIVAL IN THE WASTES OF WATER AROUND THEM.

U97

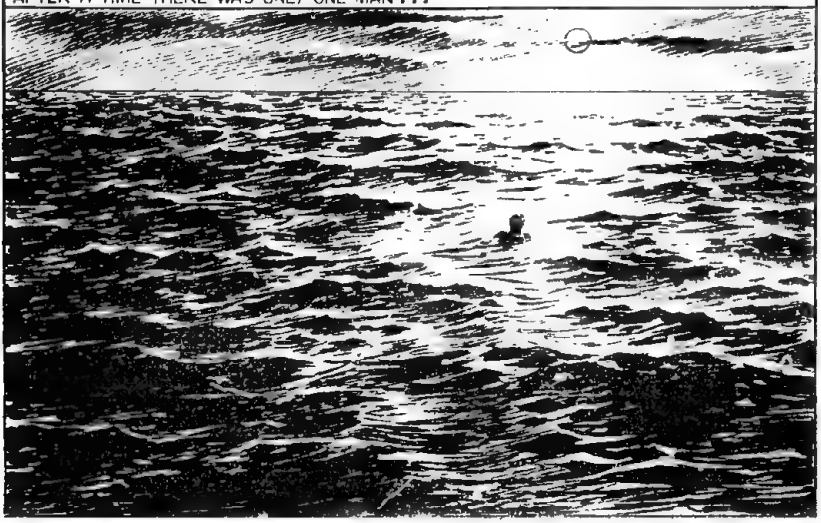
OPEN UP, YOU DEVIL!

YOU MERCILESS SWINE!

U97 WAS SUBMERGING. IN THAT VORTEX OF WATER, THE HANDFUL OF DOOMED MEN WERE TORN AND BATTERED AND SUCKED DOWN. IT HAD DISAPPOINTED KAPITAN DIRK WOLF THAT HE WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO WITNESS THE SPECTACLE . . .

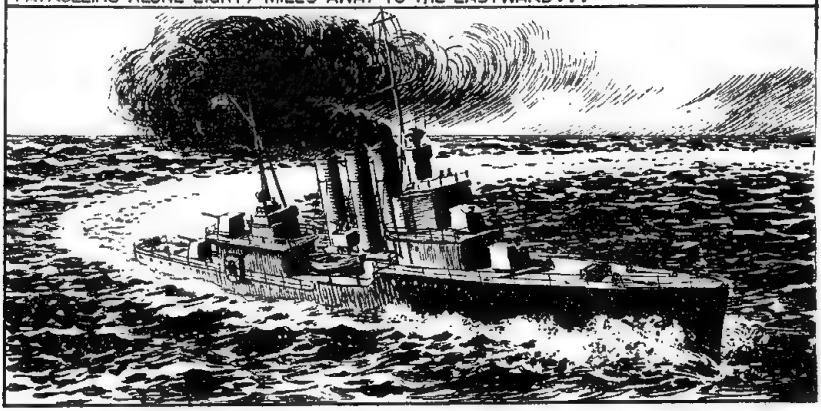


THE DISTURBED WATER CALMED. THE DYING SUN SHONE DOWN ON THE ENDLESS HORIZON OF THE ATLANTIC. .THREE MEN SWAM WEAKLY ON THE BLANK SURFACE OF THE SEA. AFTER A TIME THERE WAS ONLY ONE MAN . . .

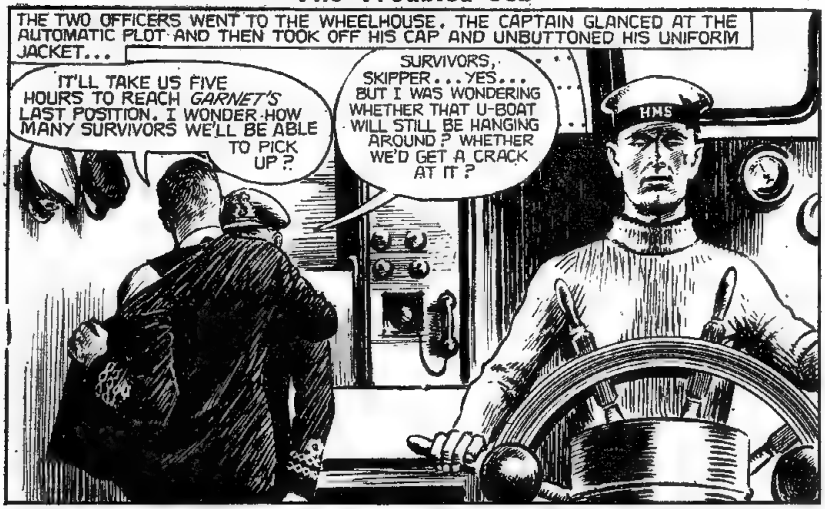


Chapter 3. The HUNTER

THE LAST SIGNAL FROM H.M.S. *GARNET*, CHOKED OFF BY THE SEA AS IT POURED OVER THE TRANSMITTERS, WAS INTERCEPTED BY HER SISTER SHIP, THE *MOONSTONE*, PATROLLING ALONE EIGHTY MILES AWAY TO THE EASTWARD . . .



THE *MOONSTONE* HEELED OVER IN A NINETY DEGREE TURN TO THE WEST AND INCREASED SPEED TO MAXIMUM REVOLUTIONS. HURRIEDLY CALLED FROM HIS DAY CABIN, THE CAPTAIN WAS MET ON THE UPPER DECK BY HIS FIRST LIEUTENANT . . .


THE TWO OFFICERS WENT TO THE WHEELHOUSE. THE CAPTAIN GLANCED AT THE AUTOMATIC PLOT AND THEN TOOK OFF HIS CAP AND UNBUTTONED HIS UNIFORM JACKET...
IT'LL TAKE US FIVE HOURS TO REACH GARNET'S LAST POSITION. I WONDER HOW MANY SURVIVORS WE'LL BE ABLE TO PICK UP?
SURVIVORS, SKIPPER... YES... BUT I WAS WONDERING WHETHER THAT U-BOAT WILL STILL BE HANGING AROUND? WHETHER WE'D GET A CRACK AT IT?
HMS

BARTHOLOMEW SHEPHERD, OF THE TUGBOAT ALICE, WAS NOW A COMMANDER IN THE ROYAL NAVAL RESERVE AND CAPTAIN OF H.M.S. MOONSTONE. HE HAD CHANGED HIS UNIFORM, BUT HE REFUSED TO CHANGE HIS HABITS...
AYE... YOU ALWAYS WERE THE BLOODTHIRSTY ONE, GEORGE KEELER... WELL, I TOLD THE ADMIRAL I WAS MORE USED TO SAVING SHIPS THAN SINKING THEM, BUT HE WOULDN'T LISTEN TO ME. KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN FOR THE GARNET'S CARLEY FLOATS, LOOKOUTS...
AND KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN FOR THAT U-BOAT, TOO, MEN...
HMS

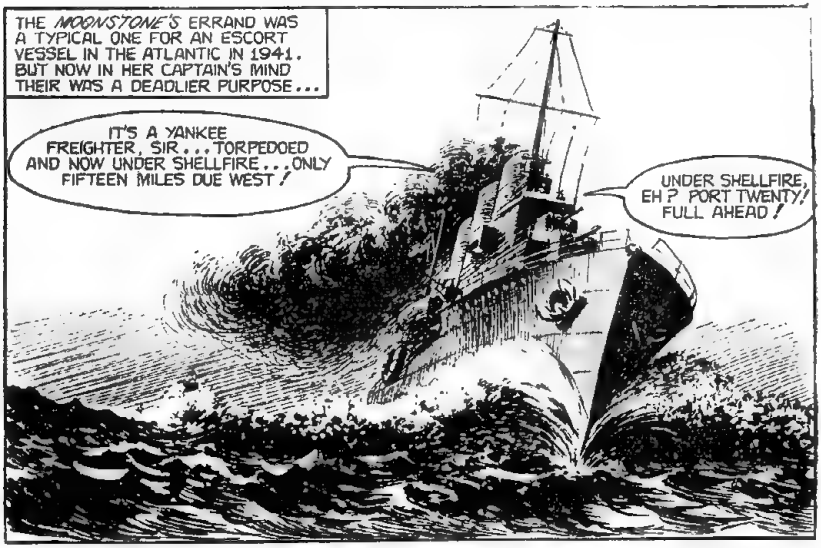
SHORT OF OFFICERS AND MEN, THE ADMIRALTY HAD CALLED ON RESERVISTS LIKE BART SHEPHERD AND GEORGE KEELER. FIVE MONTHS BEFORE, THE CREW OF THE *ALICE* HAD BEEN DRAFTED ABOARD H.M.S. *MOONSTONE* AND SISTER SHIPS LIKE THE ILL-FATED *GARNET*...
WELL...THIS IS WHERE THE *GARNET* SANK. BUT SHE MUST HAVE GONE DOWN LIKE A STONE—AND HER CREW WITH HER.
SIR! MAN IN THE SEA! STARBOARD BEAM!

ALREADY, THE TUGBOAT MEN HAD SEEN ACTION IN THE FIERCE WAR OF THE LIFELINES IN THE WESTERN ATLANTIC. ALREADY, IN THEIR OBSOLETE DESTROYERS, THEY HAD MET THEIR UNDERWATER ENEMIES IN A BATTLE WHERE NO QUARTER WAS GIVEN...
HANDLE HIM GENTLY, MEN...HE'S BEEN IN THE WATER FOR FIVE HOURS...
ONE SURVIVOR...ONLY ONE SURVIVOR...

THEY LIFTED THE MAN CAREFULLY TO THE DECK OF THE *MOONSTONE*. HE WAS YOUNG AND THERE WAS OIL MATTED IN HIS SHOCK OF FAIR HAIR. GEORGE KEELER LEANED OVER HIM . . . AND STARTED . . .
GET HIM DOWN TO THE SICK BAY—
SKIPPER . . . DON'T YOU RECOGNISE HIM ? IT'S ALBERT . . . YOUNG ALBERT LANE !
THEY TOOK THE EX-DECKHAND OF THE TUGBOAT *ALICE* DOWN TO THE SICK BAY. BUT DESPITE HIS WEAKNESS, THE YOUNG SEAMAN HAD TO TELL HIS GHASTLY STORY.
SKIPPER, IT'S *YOU!* LISTEN . . . THAT SWINE OF A U-BOAT CAPTAIN . . . WE WERE SWIMMING IN THE WATER AFTER THE SHIP WENT DOWN AND HE BECKONED US OVER TO THE SUB. HE POINTED TO THE RAFTS LASHED TO THE U-BOAT'S HULL . . .
GO ON, ALBERT . . .
THE BOY'S VOICE WAS RAW. WITH HORROR . . .
WE THOUGHT HE WAS GOING TO GIVE US A CHANCE TO LIVE. SOME OF HIS CREW EVEN RAN DOWN THE HULL TO CUT THEM LOOSE. BUT HE LET US SWIM RIGHT UP TO THE U-BOAT AND THEN HE SLAMMED DOWN THE HATCH AND SUBMERGED . . . THE LADS WERE SUCKED DOWN . . . AND HE WAS GRINNING . . . THE DEVIL WAS GRINNING . . .

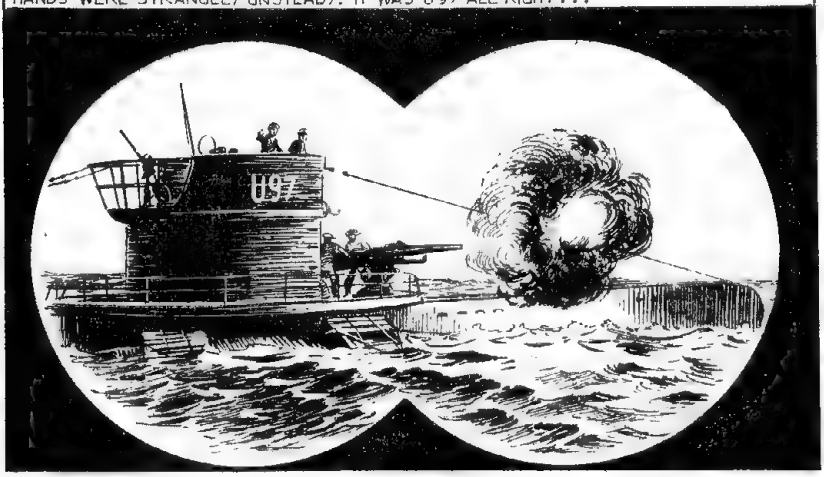
THE FEVERISH VOICE TRAILED AWAY. IN THE SILENCE, LIEUTENANT GEORGE KEELER SPOKE...
DID YOU SEE THE IDENTIFICATION NUMBER ON THE CONNING TOWER OF THAT U-BOAT, ALBERT?
YES, MISTER KEELER, I SAW IT! I SAW IT ONCE BEFORE, AND SO DID YOU... IT WAS U-NINETY-SEVEN!

GEORGE KEELER LOOKED AT THE GRIM FACE OF HIS CAPTAIN — AND WAS SILENT, BUT AT DAWN, ON THE BRIDGE NEXT DAY...
WELL, SKIPPER?
GEORGE, I'VE ALWAYS BELIEVED IN SAVING LIFE RATHER THAN TAKING IT. NOW I KNOW THAT THERE ARE SOME MEN WHO DESERVE TO DIE. THE CAPTAIN OF U-NINETY-SEVEN IS ONE OF THEM. IF EVER I MEET UP WITH HIM AGAIN...
SIR... THE TELEGRAPHIST REPORTS AN S.O.S. ON DISTRESS WAVE...
HMS


THE MOONSTONE'S ERRAND WAS A TYPICAL ONE FOR AN ESCORT VESSEL IN THE ATLANTIC IN 1941. BUT NOW IN HER CAPTAIN'S MIND THEIR WAS A DEADLIER PURPOSE...
IT'S A YANKEE FREIGHTER, SIR...TORPEDOED AND NOW UNDER SHELLFIRE...ONLY FIFTEEN MILES DUE WEST!
UNDER SHELLFIRE, EH? PORT TWENTY! FULL AHEAD!

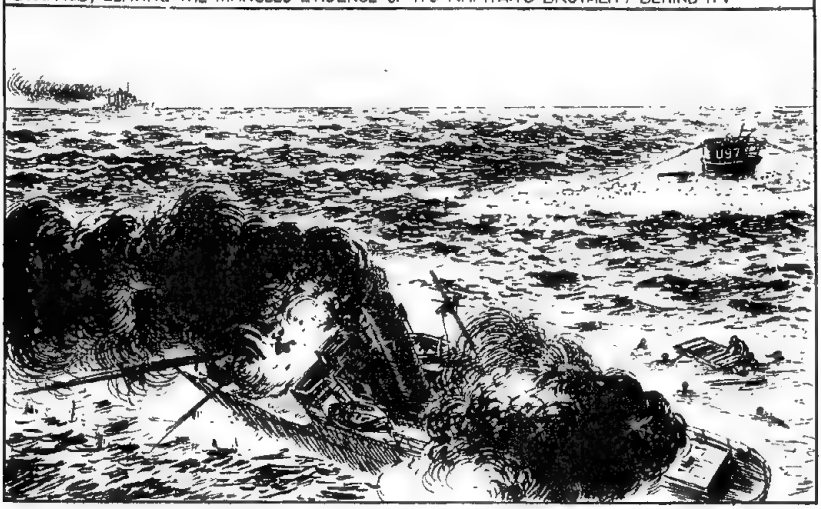
BART SHEPHERD HAD FOUND IN HIS BIG GENTLE HEART THE CAPACITY FOR HATRED. HE HATED THE UNKNOWN CAPTAIN OF U97 WITH THE VIOLENCE WHICH ONLY THE HUMANE MAN CAN FEEL FOR THE INHUMAN.
THERE SHE IS, SIR... FINE ON THE PORT BOW! U-BOAT ON THE SURFACE!
I SEE HER, LOOKOUT...

BART LIFTED HIS BINOCULARS. IT TOOK HIM SEVERAL SECONDS TO FOCUS THEM. HIS BIG HANDS WERE STRANGELY UNSTEADY. IT WAS U97 ALL RIGHT...



GEORGE KEELER GLANCED NOW AT HIS CAPTAIN. HE HAD NEVER SEEN SUCH GRIMNESS IN BART SHEPHERD'S KINDLY FACE BEFORE...

AN ASSASSIN ALMOST CAUGHT IN THE ACT, U97 WAS ALREADY SLIDING BENEATH THE SURFACE, LEAVING THE MANGLED EVIDENCE OF ITS KAPITAN'S BRUTALITY BEHIND IT.



AS THE OLD DESTROYER SWEPT IN TOWARDS THE SINKING FREIGHTER, REPORTS BEGAN TO REACH THE BRIDGE FROM THE ASDIC HUT...

ITS COURSE TRACKED BY THE DESTROYER'S ASDIC BEAM, U97 WAS SLIPPING AWAY FAST UNDER THE SURFACE. BUT THE CAPTAIN OF THE *MOONSTONE* HELD ON TO HIS COURSE.

STILL DRAWING LEFT, SIR... RANGE SIX THOUSAND... GOING AWAY...

SKIPPER, AREN'T YOU GOING TO FOLLOW THAT ECHO? YOU'RE LETTING THE U-BOAT ESCAPE!

SLOW AHEAD, ENGINE-ROOM... WE'LL STOP AND PICK UP THOSE SURVIVORS, GEORGE...

THE BITTERNESS OF SEEING U97 SLIP AWAY WHILE HIS FIGHTING SHIP WASTED TIME ON AN ERRAND OF MERCY WAS TOO MUCH FOR GEORGE KEELER.

TAKE YOUR TIME PICKING UP THOSE SURVIVORS, GEORGE! TEN MINUTES SHOULD BE IDEAL!

HANG IT, SKIPPER, YOU'RE NOT COMMANDING A TUGBOAT NOW! THIS IS A DESTROYER! WHY THE BLAZES DON'T WE DESTROY THAT FILTHY U-BOAT THEN?

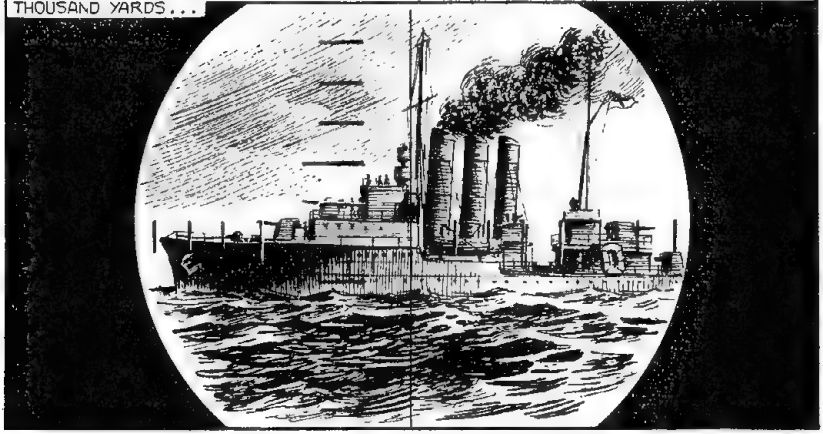
BART SHEPHERD GRINNED. HE WAS READY TO MEET KAPITAN DIRK WOLF AGAIN... BUT THE MEETING WOULD BE OF HIS OWN CHOOSING...

ANYWAY, HOVE-TO LIKE THIS FOR TEN MINUTES, WE'RE GIVING THAT MURDERING SWINE OF A JERRY CAPTAIN A PERFECT TARGET!

AYE, GEORGE... THAT'S JUST WHAT I WANT TO GIVE HIM...

Chapter 4. NEMESIS STRIKES

IT WAS INDEED A PERFECT TARGET KAPITAN DIRK WOLF SAW THROUGH THE ATTACK PERISCOPE SEVEN MINUTES LATER WHEN HE BROUGHT U97 UP TO FOURTEEN METRES. THE BRITISH DESTROYER WAS MOTIONLESS AND BROADSIDE-ON AT A RANGE OF EIGHT THOUSAND YARDS...



WHAT MADE THE TARGET MORE PERFECT WAS THE FACT THAT THE BRITISH DESTROYER WAS ENGAGED IN PICKING UP SURVIVORS. OBERLEUTNANT HEINI FRANCK SAW THE PALE GLARE IN HIS COMMANDER'S EYES AS HE LOWERED THE PERISCOPE...

THE INCIDENT OF THE *GARNET'S* SURVIVORS THE NIGHT BEFORE, THE SOUND OF THOSE FRANTIC FISTS BEATING ON THE IRON SHELL OF THEIR LOCKED CRAFT, HAD SICKENED THE CREW OF U97. THEY OBEYED THEIR KAPITAN SULLENLY NOW...

FRANCK...ENEMY'S BEARING GREEN ONE-FIVE-FIVE, STATIONARY, RANGE EIGHT THOUSAND...WELL, MAN? WHY DO YOU HESITATE? ARE YOU AFRAID, HEIN?

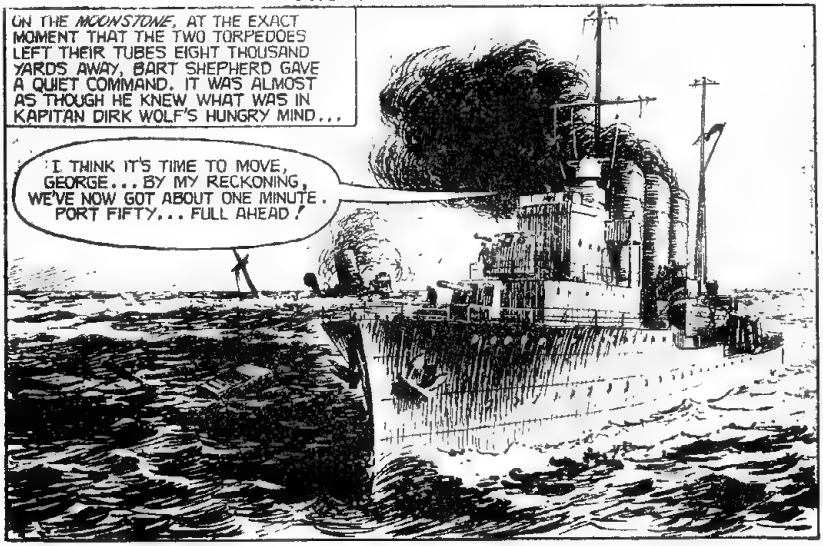
NOT FOR MYSELF, HERR KAPITAN. THE DEFLECTION IS TWO-FIVE DEGREES LEFT...

HEINI FRANCK'S VOICE WAS ALMOST INSOLENT, BUT KAPITAN DIRK WOLF DID NOT NOTICE. THE MOMENT OF EXECUTION WAS TOO SWEET, HIS EARS WERE DRUMMING WITH EXCITEMENT...

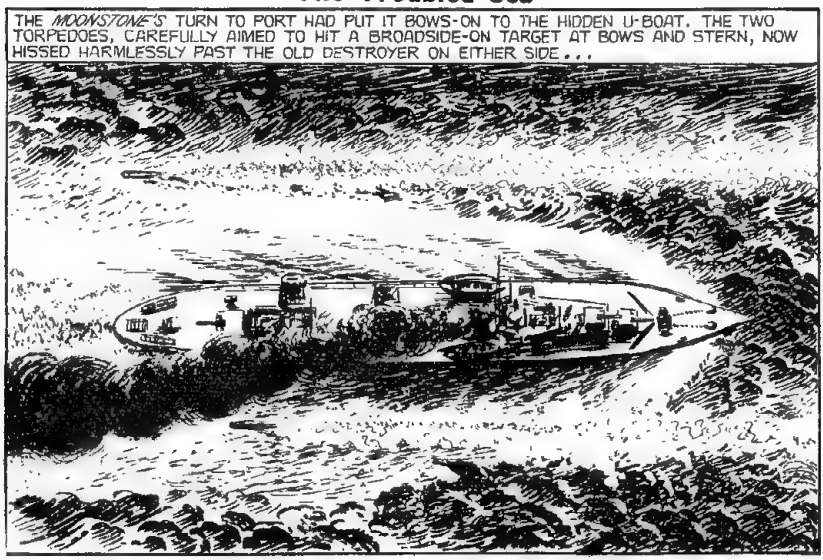
STAND BY TO FIRE! FIRE SIX... FIRE FIVE...

TORPEDOES RUNNING!

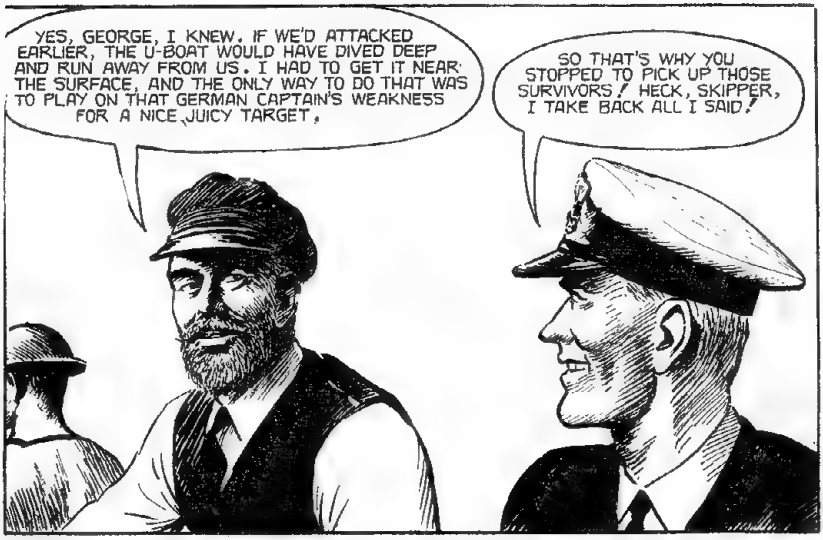
THE TWO TORPEDOES SHOT FROM THEIR TUBES INTO THE MURKY WATER, LUNGING FORWARD AT FORTY-KNOTS TOWARDS THE TARGET AND ANGLING OUTWARDS. IT WOULD TAKE THEM ONE MINUTE AND FORTY EIGHT SECONDS TO REACH THE *MOONSTONE*...


ON THE *MOONSTONE*, AT THE EXACT MOMENT THAT THE TWO TORPEDOES LEFT THEIR TUBES EIGHT THOUSAND YARDS AWAY, BART SHEPHERD GAVE A QUIET COMMAND. IT WAS ALMOST AS THOUGH HE KNEW WHAT WAS IN KAPITAN DIRK WOLF'S HUNGRY MIND...
I THINK IT'S TIME TO MOVE, GEORGE... BY MY RECKONING, WE'VE NOW GOT ABOUT ONE MINUTE. PORT FIFTY... FULL AHEAD!

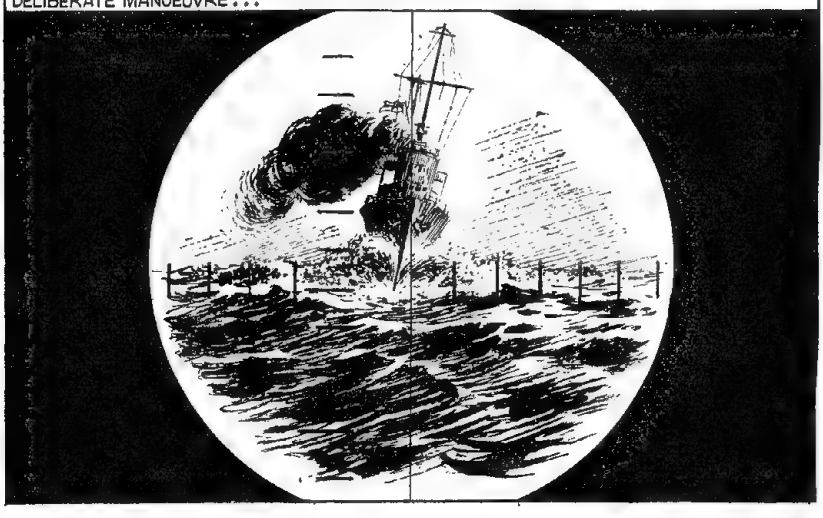
IT TOOK THE OLD DESTROYER ONE MINUTE AND TWENTY SECONDS TO MAKE THE TURN TO PORT. IT WAS THE STARBOARD LOOKOUT WHO SAW THE TELL-TALE TRACKS TWENTY SECONDS LATER.
TORPEDOES, SIR... PORT AND STARBOARD BOW!
AH... ONE MINUTE FORTY SECONDS... I WAS NEAR ENOUGH RIGHT!


THE *MOONSTONE'S* TURN TO PORT HAD PUT IT BOWS-ON TO THE HIDDEN U-BOAT. THE TWO TORPEDOES, CAREFULLY AIMED TO HIT A BROADSIDE-ON TARGET AT BOWS AND STERN, NOW HISSED HARMLESSLY PAST THE OLD DESTROYER ON EITHER SIDE...

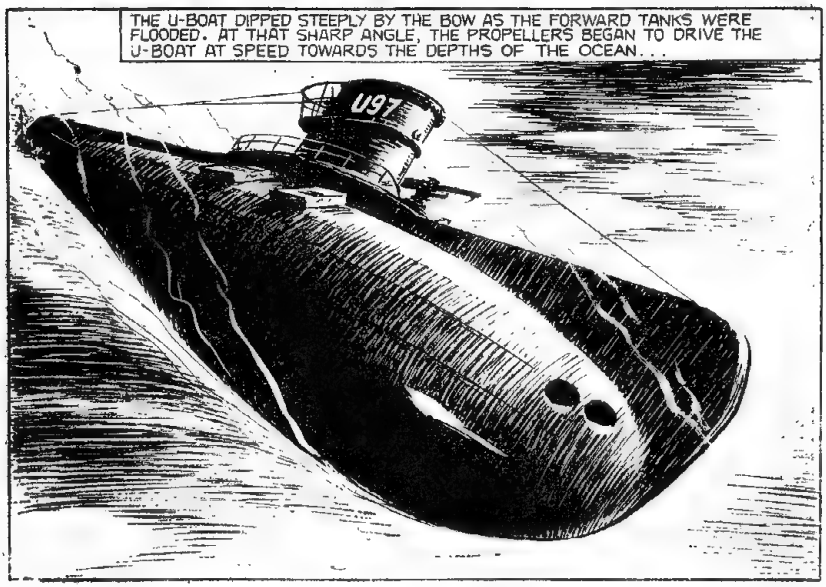
THE *MOONSTONE* HAD DRAWN ITS OPPONENT'S FANGS. NOW IT THRESHED FORWARD TO THE ATTACK. ON ITS BRIDGE, A BELLIGERENT YOUNG LIEUTENANT LOOKED WITH A NEW RESPECT AT HIS COMMANDING OFFICER...
PORT TEN, HELMSMAN! SET DEPTH CHARGES TO ONE FIFTY FEET!
SKIPPER... THAT U-BOAT... YOU *KNEW* IT WAS GOING TO FIRE THOSE KIPPERS AT US!



KAPITAN DIRK WOLF HAD ALREADY SCENTED TROUBLE. THE MOMENT HE SAW THE BOWS OF THE DESTROYER TURN, HE KNEW THAT HIS TORPEDOES HAD MISSED. WHEN THE RANGE CLOSED RAPIDLY HE KNEW THAT THE TURN HAD NOT BEEN A LUCKY CHANCE BUT A DELIBERATE MANOEUVRE...

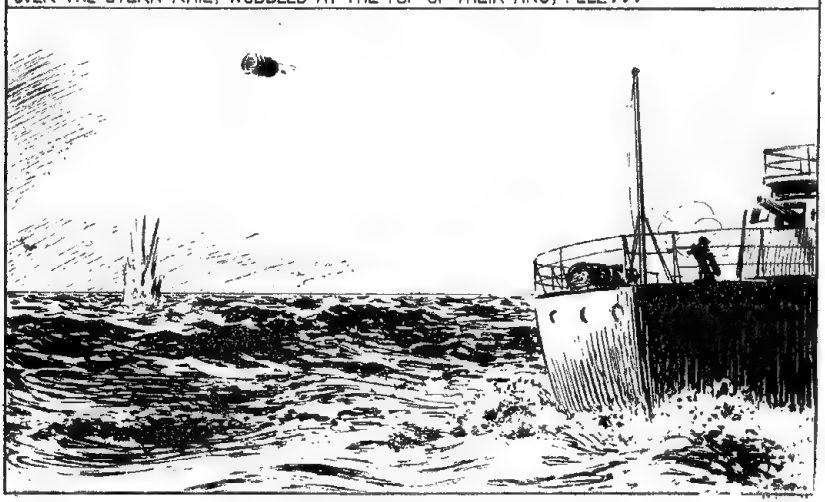


THE BRITISH CAPTAIN WAS NOW ATTACKING HIM. KAPITAN WOLF RAGED INWARDLY AS HE WHIPPED THE PERISCOPE DOWN. IT WAS NOT GOOD TO KNOW THAT AN ENEMY COULD READ HIS THOUGHTS. HE SPOKE HARSHLY TO HIS EXECUTIVE OFFICER...
EMERGENCY DIVE TO EIGHTY METRES, HERR OBERLEUTNANT! SILENT ROUTINE!


THE U-BOAT DIPPED STEEPLY BY THE BOW AS THE FORWARD TANKS WERE FLOODED. AT THAT SHARP ANGLE, THE PROPELLERS BEGAN TO DRIVE THE U-BOAT AT SPEED TOWARDS THE DEPTHS OF THE OCEAN...
U97

AT EIGHTY METRES, THE U-BOAT STEADIED ON AN EVEN KEEL. IN THE CONTROL ROOM, MEN HELD THEIR BREATH AND SWEATED AS THE DRUMMING OF THE DESTROYER'S PROPELLERS FILLED U97'S IRON SHELL...

HER ASDIC BEAM PROBING AHEAD OF HER, THE *MOONSTONE* SWEPT IN FOR THE KILL. THE THROWERS BARKED SUDDENLY AT HER STERN. THE DEPTH CHARGE CANISTERS CATAPULTED OVER THE STERN RAIL, WOBBLED AT THE TOP OF THEIR ARC, FELL...



ONE OF THE DEPTH CHARGES EXPLODED DIRECTLY BELOW U97, TWO EXPLODED CLOSE ABOVE. CAUGHT BETWEEN THOSE APPALLING SHOCK WAVES, THE U-BOAT WAS FLUNG ABOUT AS THOUGH BY A MONSTROUS HAND.

HIMMEL!

AS THE RUMBLE OF THE DEPTH CHARGES DIED AWAY, THE SEASONED HEINI FRANCK AT THE VALVE CONTROLS BROUGHT U97 BACK TO AN EVEN KEEL.

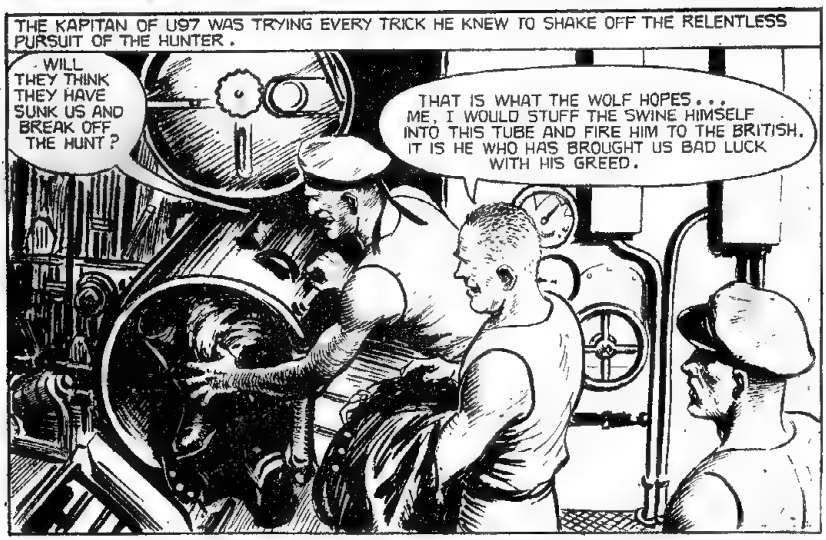
NO MATERIAL DAMAGE, HERR KAPITAN... A SMALL LEAK IN NUMBER TWO BATTERY, BUT I CAN TAKE CARE OF IT.

YOU HEAR, MEN... THE SWINE OF AN ENGLANDER HAS FAILED. NOW IT IS OUR TURN TO HUNT HIM!

BUT AS THE KAPITAN OF U97 TURNED HUNGRILY TO HIS EXECUTIVE OFFICER, THE ORDER TO ATTACK ON HIS LIPS, THE HYDROPHONE OPERATOR BROKE IN...
ASDIC TRANSMISSIONS... GREEN OH-SIX-FIVE...
TEUFEL! SO WE HAVE NOT YET SHAKEN HIM OFF! DITMAS, STAND BY PILLENWERFERS... RELEASE TWO...
JAWOHL, HERR KAPITAN.

THE PILLENWERFER, A SMALL CONE EMITTING A RADIO SIGNAL, WAS RELEASED BY HUNTED U-BOATS TO CONFUSE THE ECHOES ON THE HUNTER'S ASDIC PLOT. BUT IT DID NOT CONFUSE THE MEN WHO WERE HUNTING U97...
HE IS STILL THERE... GREEN FIVE-TWO-SIX... CLOSING.
DITMAS, YOU FOOL, DID I NOT GIVE YOU AN ORDER?
THE PILLENWERFERS HAVE BEEN RELEASED...

NOW BARTHOLOMEW SHEPHERD AND DIRK WOLF WERE LOCKED IN DEADLY COMBAT, ONE ON THE SUNLIT SURFACE OF THE SEA, THE OTHER IN THE GREEN DEPTHS.
SO... THE ENGLANDER FOLLOWS US STILL! GREBEL, LOAD NUMBER FIVE TUBE WITH UNIFORMS, CAPS, THE USUAL DEBRIS, AND OIL... FIRE FIVE AS SOON AS YOU ARE READY...
AS YOU WISH... HERR KAPITAN...

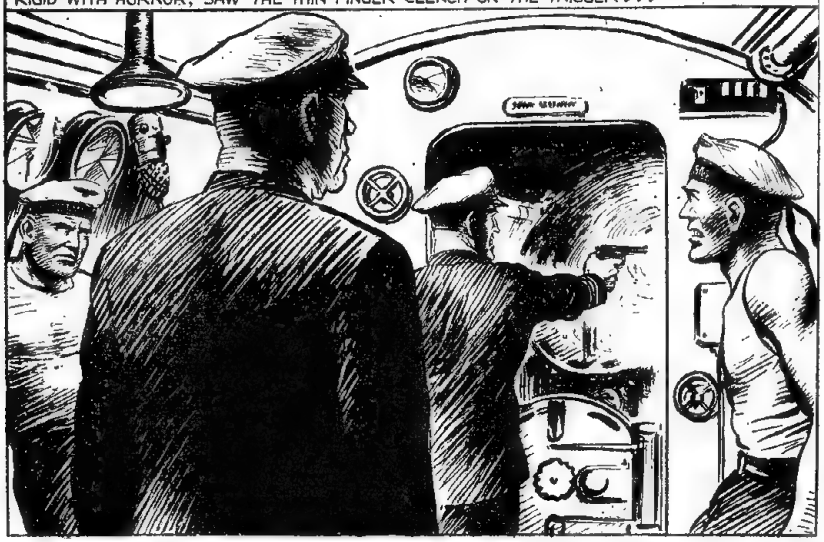

THE KAPITAN OF U97 WAS TRYING EVERY TRICK HE KNEW TO SHAKE OFF THE RELENTLESS PURSUIT OF THE HUNTER.
WILL THEY THINK THEY HAVE SUNK US AND BREAK OFF THE HUNT?
THAT IS WHAT THE WOLF HOPES... ME, I WOULD STUFF THE SWINE HIMSELF INTO THIS TUBE AND FIRE HIM TO THE BRITISH. IT IS HE WHO HAS BROUGHT US BAD LUCK WITH HIS GREED.

FIVE TUBE WAS FIRED. WOULD THE BRITISH BE FOOLED BY THE FLOATING DEBRIS? THE ANSWER WAS THE SOUND OF THE DESTROYER'S ASDIC BEAM WHICH FELL ACROSS THE IRON BACK OF THE U-BOAT LIKE A WHIP.
ASDIC TRANSMISSIONS... GREEN-ONE-OH... RANGE ONE THOUSAND CLOSING.
TEUFEL! STILL HE COMES!
THE SWINE... THE SWINE...

TRAPPED IN THEIR IRON SHELL BELOW THE SEA, THE STRAIN ON THE MEN OF U97 WAS UNBEARABLE. IT WAS WILLI DITMAS WHO BROKE...
SILENCE, DITMAS!
YOU... YOU ARE THE SWINE, HERR KAPITAN WOLF! YOU ARE THE KILLER, THE MURDERER! IT IS YOU THE BRITISH ARE HUNTING, FOR ALL THE MEN YOU HAVE SLAUGHTERED IN COLD BLOOD!

KAPITAN DIRK WOLF LOOKED SWIFTLY ROUND THE CONTROL ROOM. THE EYES WHICH LOOKED BACK AT HIM WERE HARD, STONY. HE MOVED SAVAGELY TO THE PISTOL CABINET ON THE WALL...

THE YOUNG SIGNALMAN BOLTED INTO THE FORWARD TORPEDO ROOM. KAPITAN DIRK WOLF FOLLOWED HIM THERE, THE MAUSER PISTOL IN HIS HAND. THE MEN IN THE CONTROL ROOM, RIGID WITH HORROR, SAW THE THIN FINGER CLENCH ON THE TRIGGER...



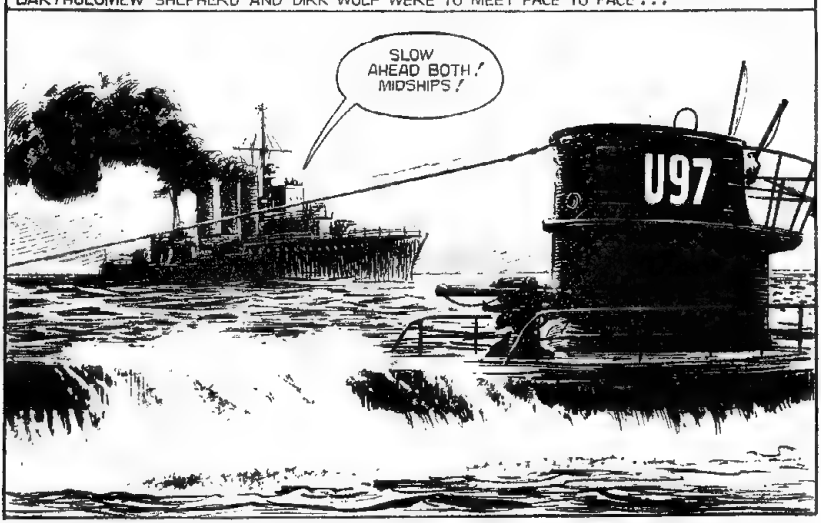
THE SHOT BLOTTED OUT MOMENTARILY THE SOUND OF THE DESTROYER'S ASDIC BEAM. A SMELL OF CORDITE HUNG BITTERLY IN THE EXHAUSTED AIR.
THAT IS THE ONLY MEDICINE FOR MADNESS! NOW, OBERLEUTNANT FRANCK, YOU WILL BRING THE BOAT TO THE SURFACE...

THE DEATH OF WILLI DITMAS HAD STUNNED THE MEN OF U97. THE VOICE OF HEINI FRANCK, WHEN HE SPOKE, WAS A HARSH CROAK.
YOU WILL SURRENDER, HERR KAPITAN?
SURRENDER... ME, DIRK WOLF? I SHALL PLAY ON THE STUPID WEAKNESS OF THE ENGLANDER. HE WILL SEE US WALLOWING ON THE SURFACE AND HE WILL HESITATE TO ATTACK A HELPLESS SHIP. IN THAT MOMENT I SHALL TORPEDO HIM. PREPARE THE STERN TUBE...

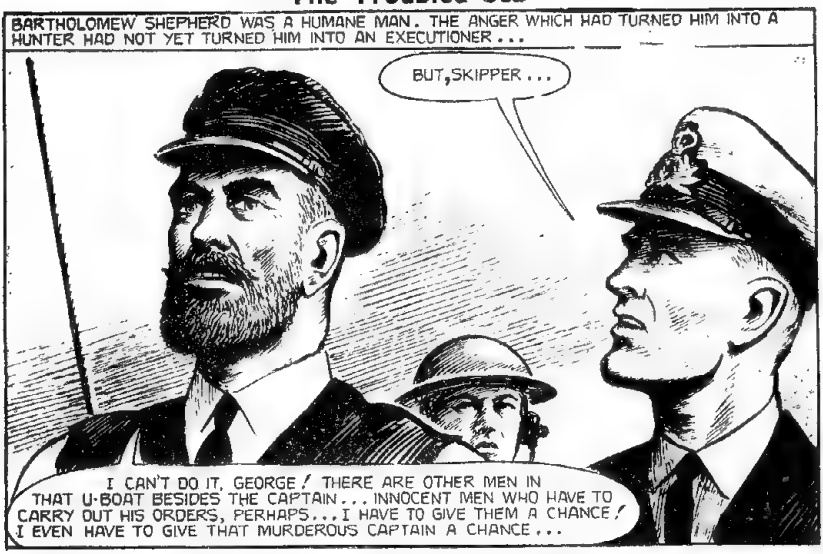
H.M.S. MOONSTONE WAS TURNING FOR A SECOND DEPTH CHARGE ATTACK WHEN THE CLEAR VOICE OF A LOOKOUT RANG OUT EXCITEDLY...
U-BOAT'S BLOWING ITS TANKS, SIR, FINE ON THE STARBOARD BOW!

The Troubled Sea

THE SEA LASHING AROUND ITS SINISTER HULL, U97 ROSE TO THE SURFACE. *MOONSTONE* WAS THEN FOUR HUNDRED YARDS AWAY, BROADSIDE-ON AND SLOWING. ONCE MORE, BARTHOLOMEW SHEPHERD AND DIRK WOLF WERE TO MEET FACE TO FACE...



ON THE BRIDGE OF THE *MOONSTONE*, GEORGE KEELER LOWERED HIS BINOCULARS AND GLANCED AT HIS CAPTAIN.


BARTHOLOMEW SHEPHERD WAS A HUMANE MAN. THE ANGER WHICH HAD TURNED HIM INTO A HUNTER HAD NOT YET TURNED HIM INTO AN EXECUTIONER...
BUT, SKIPPER...
I CAN'T DO IT, GEORGE! THERE ARE OTHER MEN IN THAT U-BOAT BESIDES THE CAPTAIN... INNOCENT MEN WHO HAVE TO CARRY OUT HIS ORDERS, PERHAPS... I HAVE TO GIVE THEM A CHANCE! I EVEN HAVE TO GIVE THAT MURDEROUS CAPTAIN A CHANCE...

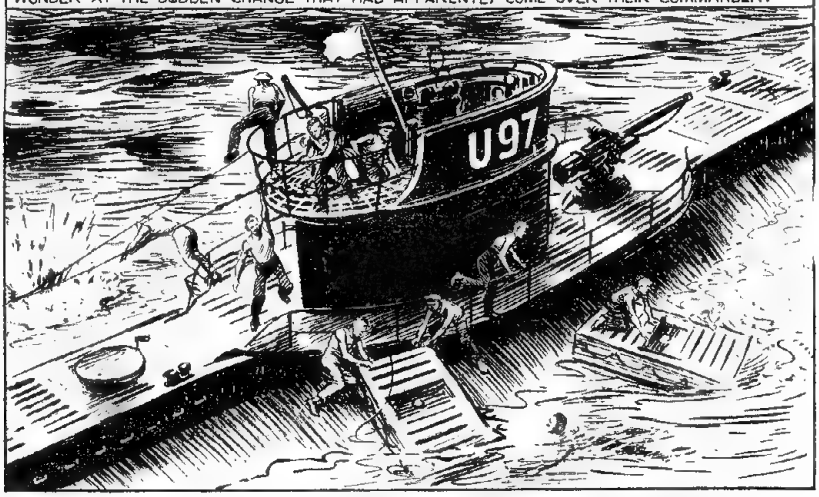
KAPITAN DIRK WOLF'S CALCULATED GAMBLE HAD COME OFF. THE DESTROYER WAS NO LONGER MOVING AHEAD.
SO... I WAS RIGHT! THE ENGLANDER DOES NOT WANT TO HURT US... BUT NOW HE HAS GIVEN US THE CHANCE TO HURT HIM! FOLLOW ME, OBERLEUTNANT...

The Troubled Sea

THE BRUTAL DEATH OF WILLI DITMAS HAD DRIVEN THE CREW OF U97 BEYOND THE BARBED FENCE OF OBEDIENCE. THEY HAD TAKEN THEIR LAST MURDEROUS ORDER FROM DIRK WOLF.
THIS IS MUTINY, OBERLEUTNANT! YOU WILL OBEY MY ORDER!
THERE WILL BE NO MORE KILLING, HERR KAPITAN!

KAPITAN DIRK WOLF TURNED WILDLY TO LOOK AT THE FACES OF HIS MEN. THEIR EYES WERE COLD, CONTEMPTUOUS, ACCUSING. SUDDENLY THE EXPRESSION ON WOLF'S FACE RELAXED. HE SHRUGGED AS IF IN AGREEMENT...
VERY WELL...THEN WE ARE AT THE MERCY OF THE ENGLANDERS / IT WILL BE SENSELESS TO FIGHT ON UNTIL WE ARE ALL KILLED. RUN UP A WHITE FLAG... AND ABANDON SHIP!

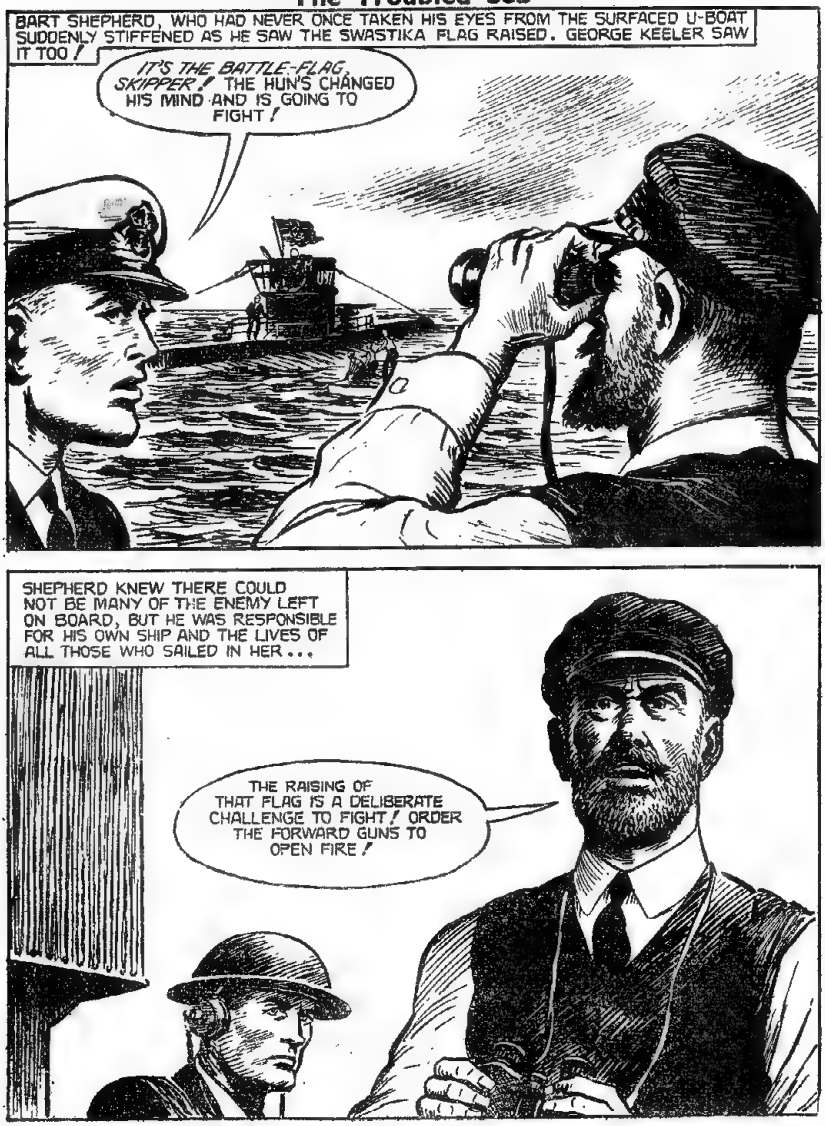
CONCERNED ONLY WITH THE SAVING OF THEIR OWN LIVES, NONE OF THE CREW PAUSED TO WONDER AT THE SUDDEN CHANGE THAT HAD APPARENTLY COME OVER THEIR COMMANDER.



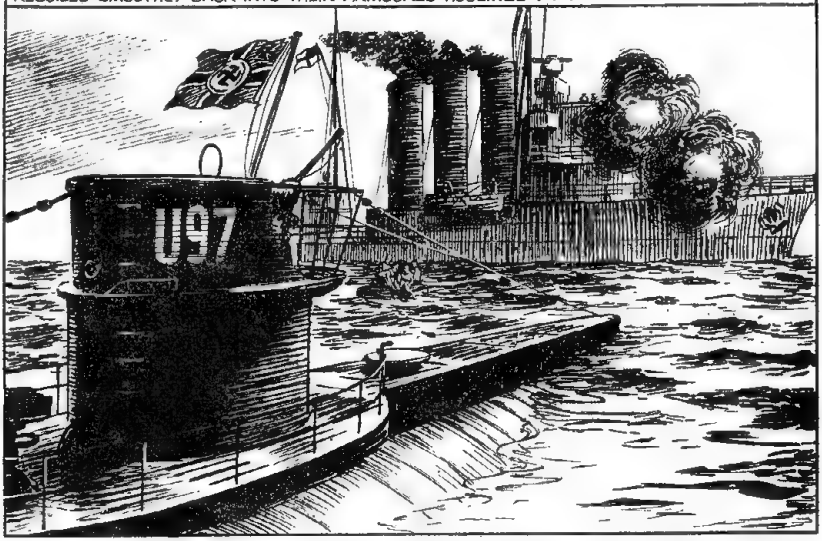
ON THE BRIDGE OF THE *MOONSTONE*, GEORGE KEELER LOWERED HIS BINOCULARS AND GLANCED AT HIS CAPTAIN. BART SHEPHERD WAS STILL LOOKING AT THE U-BOAT AND THE MEN SWARMING OVER ITS DECKS TO LEAVE IT.

BUT DIRK WOLF HAD NOT GIVEN UP THE WAR. HE HAD MERELY DISPOSED OF A CREW THAT WAS NO LONGER EASY TO CONTROL.
FRANCK! YOU AND I WILL NOW SINK THE ENGLANDER. THAT FOOL ON THE DESTROYER BRIDGE WILL NOT GIVE THE ORDER TO FIRE WHILST WE ARE UNDER THE WHITE FLAG OF TRUCE!
FIGHT UNDER A WHITE FLAG? I AM AN OFFICER IN THE GERMAN NAVY... A NAVY WITH HONOUR! I REFUSE TO TAKE PART IN SUCH TREACHERY!
WOLF DID NOT UTTER A WORD — BUT THE GUN BLASTED ECHOINGLY IN THE CONFINED SPACE AND FRANCK REELED CONVULSIVELY.
THEN I DO NOT NEED YOUR HELP! OUR STERN TORPEDO TUBE IS ALREADY IN ALIGNMENT WITH THE DESTROYER. AT THIS RANGE I CANNOT MISS!

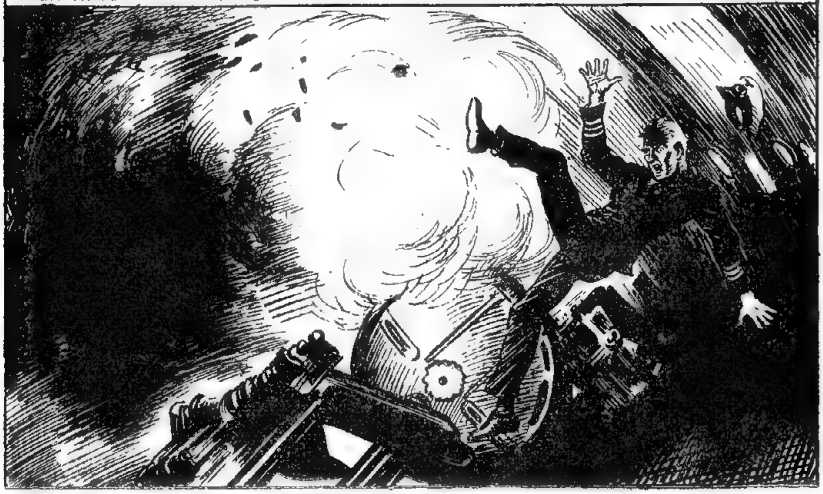
THE OBERLEUTNANT'S PAIN-WRACKED MIND SUDDENLY BEGAN TO WORK CLEARLY AS HE HEARD WOLF RUNNING THROUGH A HATCHWAY AFT.
... WHEN WE SURFACED THE ENGLANDER HELD HIS FIRE TO GIVE US A CHANCE TO SURRENDER ... NOW MAYBE I CAN GIVE HIM A CHANCE IN RETURN BEFORE WOLF FIRES!
FRANCK HAULED HIMSELF UP THE STEEL LADDER AND ON TO THE CONNING TOWER. FROM A WATER-TIGHT FLAG LOCKER, HE CLUMSILY JERKED A GERMAN NAVY BATTLE-FLAG...
I CAN'T STOP HIS TREACHERY... BUT I CAN PREVENT THE INFAMY OF IT BEING CARRIED OUT UNDER PROTECTION OF THE WHITE FLAG!


BART SHEPHERD, WHO HAD NEVER ONCE TAKEN HIS EYES FROM THE SURFACED U-BOAT SUDDENLY STIFFENED AS HE SAW THE SWASTIKA FLAG RAISED. GEORGE KEELER SAW IT TOO!
IT'S THE BATTLE-FLAG, SKIPPER! THE HUN'S CHANGED HIS MIND AND IS GOING TO FIGHT!
SHEPHERD KNEW THERE COULD NOT BE MANY OF THE ENEMY LEFT ON BOARD, BUT HE WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR HIS OWN SHIP AND THE LIVES OF ALL THOSE WHO SAILED IN HER...
THE RAISING OF THAT FLAG IS A DELIBERATE CHALLENGE TO FIGHT! ORDER THE FORWARD GUNS TO OPEN FIRE!

THE FOUR-INCH GUNS OF THE DESTROYER, ALREADY LAID ON TARGET, CRASHED AND RECOILED SMOOTHLY BACK INTO THEIR ARMOURED HOUSINGS . . .

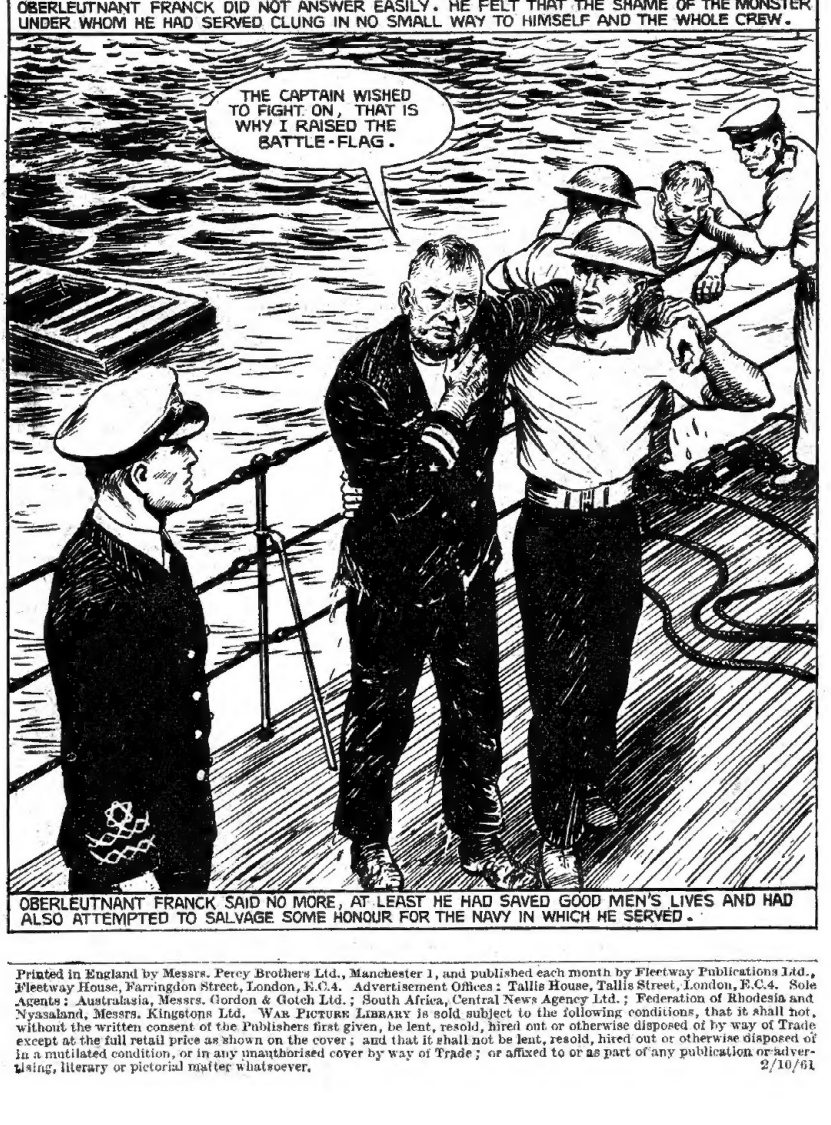


WOLF'S HAND WAS REACHING FOR THE TRIGGERING LEVER OF THE STERN TORPEDO TUBE WHEN THERE WAS AN EXPLOSIVE ROAR. THE DECK SLEWED VIOLENTLY UNDER HIS FEET . . .



STUNNED AND DEAFENED, WOLF CLAWED HIS WAY TO HIS FEET, ONLY TO BE POUNDED BACK AGAINST A BULKHEAD AS SEA WATER GEYSERED IN THROUGH THE SPLIT PRESSURE HULL. U97 WAS A DYING SHIP . . .

THE U-BOAT SANK LIKE A STONE, TAKING WITH IT ITS RECORD OF INFAMIES AND THE EVIL MAN WHO HAD ORDERED THEM TO BE COMMITTED. THE SEA CLOSED SILENTLY OVER THEM AS THE DESTROYER EDGED FORWARD AND BEGAN TO PICK UP SURVIVORS.
HOW MANY OF YOU ABANDONED SHIP?
WE ALL DID . . . EXCEPT THE CAPTAIN.
THEN WHY WAS THE BATTLE-FLAG RUN-UP?



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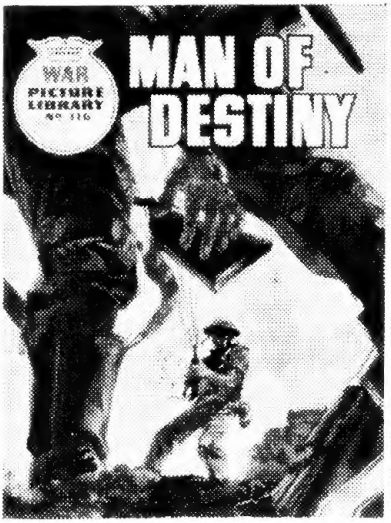

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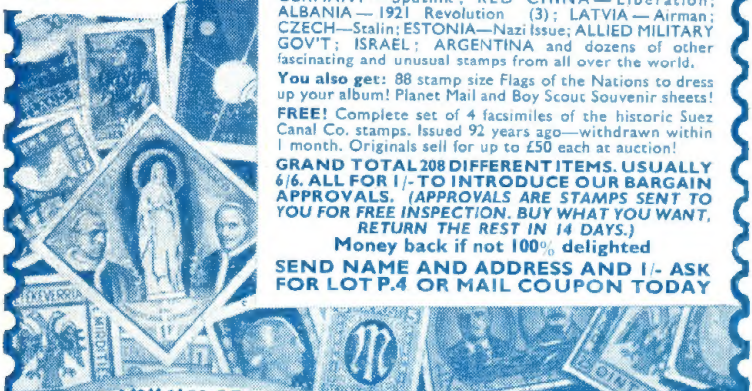

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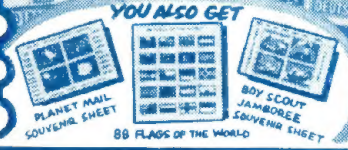

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